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## Events, Opportunities

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HEADLINE	09/01 California wildfires prompt evacuations
SOURCE	<a href="https://apnews.com/article/wildfires-fires-california-evacuations-heat-waves-de73085dfbdf0f46b64765d3fd5fbd96">https://apnews.com/article/wildfires-fires-california-evacuations-heat-waves-de73085dfbdf0f46b64765d3fd5fbd96</a>
GIST	<p>CASTAIC, Calif. (AP) — California wildfires erupted Wednesday in rural areas, racing through bone-dry brush and prompting evacuations as the state sweltered under a <a href="#">heat wave</a> that could last through Labor Day.</p> <p>Gov. Gavin Newsom declared a state of emergency with temperatures expected to be 10 to 20 degrees above normal, and urged people to help reduce demand for electricity by turning their thermostats up to 85 degrees (29 Celsius) if they won't be at home over the holiday weekend.</p>

The Route Fire in Castaic in northwestern Los Angeles County raged through about 4,625 acres (1,872 hectares) of hills containing scattered houses. Interstate 5, a major north-south route, was closed by a blaze that burned several hundred acres in only a few hours.

Media reports showed a wall of flames advancing uphill and smoke billowing thousands of feet into the air while planes dumped water from nearby Castaic Lake. There were no immediate reports of damage to buildings but a mobile home park with 94 residences was evacuated.

An elementary school also was evacuated. Temperatures in the area hit 107 degrees (42 Celsius) and winds gusted to 17 mph (27 kph), forecasters said.

Eight firefighters were treated for heat-related problems, including six who were sent to hospitals, but all were in good condition, Los Angeles County Fire Department Deputy Chief Thomas Ewald said.

More injuries were expected as crews cope with extreme heat that was expected to stretch into next week, Ewald said during a news conference Wednesday night.

“Wearing heavy firefighting gear, carrying packs, dragging hose, swinging tools, the folks out there are just taking a beating,” he said.

Aircraft would continue to drop water and fire retardant on the blaze overnight and winds could shift to the north through the night, causing the fire to burn back on itself, Ewald said.

Ewald also said there could be other fires in LA County as the searing heat continues. Bulldozers to cut firebreaks will be staffed around the county Thursday as a precaution, he said.

“This is the fire that’s burning right now. But we have 4,000 square miles (10,360 square kilometers) of LA County that we have to consider for tomorrow,” he said.

Another fire burned at least four buildings, including a home, and prompted evacuations in the Dulzura area in eastern San Diego County near the Mexican border. It swiftly grew to more than 1,600 acres (647.5 hectares) acres and prompted evacuation orders for at least 400 homes, authorities said.

State Route 94 was closed. The Mountain Empire Unified School District will be closed Thursday, officials said.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection announced that the Tecate port of entry with Mexico closed three hours early on Wednesday night because of the fire and wouldn’t reopen until conditions improved to ensure “the safety of the traveling public.” Travelers could continue to use the 24-hour Otay Mesa crossing.

No injuries were immediately reported, but there were “multiple close calls” as residents rushed to flee, said Capt. Thomas Shoots with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

“We had multiple 911 calls from folks unable to evacuate” because their homes were surrounded by the fire, Shoots told the San Diego Union-Tribune.

The National Weather Service said many valleys, foothills, mountains and desert areas of the state remained under an elevated fire risk because of low humidity and high temperatures, which set several records for the day. The hottest days were expected to be Sunday and Monday.

Wildfires have sprung up this summer throughout the Western states. The largest and deadliest blaze in California this year erupted in late July in Siskiyou County, near the Oregon state line. It killed four people and destroyed much of the small community of Klamath River.

	Scientists have said climate change has made the West warmer and drier over the last three decades and will continue to make weather more extreme and wildfires more frequent and destructive. Across the American West, a 22-year megadrought deepened so much in 2021 that the region is now in the driest spell in at least 1,200 years.
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HEADLINE	<b>09/01 DOT launches customer service dashboard</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://apnews.com/article/covid-health-travel-transportation-pete-buttigieg-ef15613d7b2eeedf72b4494a6d3a0255">https://apnews.com/article/covid-health-travel-transportation-pete-buttigieg-ef15613d7b2eeedf72b4494a6d3a0255</a>
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON (AP) — Amid months of <a href="#">mass flight cancellations and delays</a>, the Department of Transportation has launched <a href="#">a customer service dashboard</a> to help vacationers ahead of the travel-heavy Labor Day weekend.</p> <p>Starting Thursday, travelers will be able to check the dashboard and see what kinds of guarantees, refunds or compensation the major domestic airlines offer in case of flight delays or cancellations. It's designed to allow travelers to shop around and favor those airlines that offer the best compensation.</p> <p>The dashboard is part of <a href="#">an extended pressure campaign</a> from Transportation Secretary <a href="#">Pete Buttigieg</a>, who has publicly challenged the major carriers to improve service and transparency after a summer marred by cancellations and flight delays. As summer travel returned to nearly pre-coronavirus pandemic levels, airlines <a href="#">struggled to keep pace</a>, with mass cancellations being blamed on <a href="#">staffing shortages, particularly among pilots</a>.</p> <p>“Passengers deserve transparency and clarity on what to expect from an airline when there is a cancellation or disruption,” Buttigieg said in a statement Wednesday. The new tool, he said, will help travelers to “easily understand their rights, compare airline practices, and make informed decisions.”</p> <p>The dashboard compares all the major domestic airlines’ policies on issues such as which offer meals for delays of more than three hours and which offer to rebook flights on the same or different airlines at no additional charge. It focuses on what it calls “controllable” cancellations or delays — meaning those caused by mechanical issues, staffing shortages or delays in cleaning, fueling or baggage handling. Delays or cancellations caused by weather or security concerns do not count.</p> <p><a href="#">The Department of Transportation</a> is hoping that the dashboard will encourage competition among airlines to offer the most transparency and the best protections for customers.</p> <p>So far this year, airlines have canceled about 146,000 flights, or 2.6% of all flights, and nearly 1.3 million flights have been delayed, according to tracking service FlightAware. The rate of cancellations is up about one-third from the same period in 2019, before <a href="#">the pandemic</a>, and the rate of delays is up nearly one-fourth.</p> <p>Federal officials have blamed many of the disruptions on understaffing at airlines, which encouraged employees to quit after the pandemic started. The airlines <a href="#">have countered</a> by blaming staffing problems at <a href="#">the Federal Aviation Administration</a>, which employs air traffic controllers.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>09/01 Russia war critic dies; falls out of window</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.cnn.com/europe/live-news/russia-ukraine-war-news-09-01-22/h_3b48974f387168c9c3e73a7c9949889a">https://www.cnn.com/europe/live-news/russia-ukraine-war-news-09-01-22/h_3b48974f387168c9c3e73a7c9949889a</a>
GIST	The chairman of Russian oil and gas giant Lukoil — which spoke out against Russia's invasion of Ukraine — has died after falling out of a hospital window, state news agencies RIA Novosti and TASS reported Thursday.

Ravil Maganov died at the Central Clinical Hospital west of Moscow, according to the reports, which cite the hospital and law enforcement sources.

"The incident occurred around 07:00 am Moscow time in the Central Clinical Hospital ... The man fell out of the sixth-floor window and died as a result of his injuries," a source told TASS.

Lukoil confirmed Maganov's death in a statement published on its website, saying only that the executive died "following a severe illness" and making no mention of a fall.

"We deeply regret to announce that Ravil Maganov, Chairman of PJSC LUKOIL Board of Directors, passed away following a severe illness," the statement read. "Ravil Maganov immensely contributed to the development of not only the Company, but of the entire Russian oil and gas sector."

Russia's second largest oil company made headlines in early March after speaking out against Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

"The Board of Directors of LUKOIL expresses herewith its deepest concerns about the tragic events in Ukraine. Calling for the soonest termination of the armed conflict, we express our sincere empathy for all victims, who are affected by this tragedy," reads a statement from the board of directors to shareholders, staff and customers published March 3.

"We strongly support a lasting ceasefire and a settlement of problems through serious negotiations and diplomacy," added the statement.

Lukoil produces more than 2% of the world's crude oil and employs more than 100,000 people.

RIA Novosti quoted a law enforcement source who said the businessman "most likely committed suicide."

"Yes, we can confirm the fact [of death]. Investigating authorities are working on the spot to establish the causes of the incident," the source said, according to RIA.

At least five prominent Russian businessmen have reportedly died by suicide since late January, according to previous CNN reporting.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/31 Russia anarchists sabotaging railways</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.vice.com/en/article/5d3den/russian-anarchists-are-sabotaging-railways-to-stop-putins-war-on-ukraine">https://www.vice.com/en/article/5d3den/russian-anarchists-are-sabotaging-railways-to-stop-putins-war-on-ukraine</a>
GIST	<p>In late June, a group of anarchists donned camouflage, covered their faces, and snuck out into a forest about 60 miles northeast of Moscow with a lofty goal: to sabotage Putin's invasion of Ukraine by physically disabling railways used to supply weapons to the Russian military.</p> <p>The group selected its target using <a href="#">Wikimapia</a>, a "geographic online encyclopedia" that labels geographic features observed in photos from Google Maps. Once they arrived at the site, the group got to work, unscrewing dozens of nuts off the rails, and four off the rail joint, while keeping the electrical signal largely intact with a wire to evade detection over the course of several hours. Finally, they scribbled "BO(A)K," on the tracks with a white marker before dissolving back into the countryside.</p> <p>"We see [the] current conflict in Eastern Europe as the regional stage of global struggle," an anonymous spokesperson from BOAK, the anarchist communist combat organization that claimed responsibility for the sabotage, told Motherboard in a written interview. "The defeat and collapse of Putin's regime will give a chance at least for peoples of Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia to make important steps toward social liberation."</p>

The BOAK spokesperson and others spoke to Motherboard under the condition of anonymity, in order to ensure their safety from retaliation by Russian authorities.

BOAK had claimed responsibility for the railroad action on their [Telegram](#) channel and [blog](#). Sabotaging tracks that supply the Russian military is cost-effective, relatively easy for lay people, and does not harm civilians, [the group told France24](#).

Russian railways had reportedly been sabotaged by various dissidents on as many as [sixty-three occasions](#) during the first three months of Putin's invasion, according to a Russia-focused independent media outlet The Insider, although the publication noted some instances of malfunction may be attributable to routine mechanical failures. Some of the attacks were done in collaboration with [a clandestine network of railway workers](#), hackers, and other dissidents located in Belarus, Russia, and elsewhere throughout the region. Human rights groups reported that in the early months of the invasion, at least 11 dissidents in Belarus were arrested after being linked to the sabotage by authorities.

The action in June wasn't the first time BOAK claimed responsibility for an act of sabotage. In April, the group wrapped a cell phone tower's electrical cables with rags, doused them in flammable liquid, and [set them on fire](#) to impede communications between police and military forces, according to the group. Prior to Putin's assault on Ukraine, BOAK claimed responsibility for [burning a telecommunications tower](#) belonging to a Turkish company near Kyiv in solidarity with the [Rojava Revolution in North and East Syria](#).

Others are choosing military recruitment and enlistment centers in Russia as their targets. According to local media reports and Telegram channels, at least [23 offices have been attacked from February to July](#), 20 of which involved arson. In some cases, the guerillas [posted videos](#) of the [acts themselves](#); BOAK [told the anarchist radio show The Final Straw](#) that these acts of resistance are a spontaneous and decentralized phenomenon.

For BOAK, taking direct action is important for sabotaging Putin and his war machine, but it also helps dissidents gain the strength, skills and power necessary for achieving their longer-term revolutionary political goals.

"We advocate social revolution as the replacement of statist and capitalist World Order, BOAK wrote, "by the popular self-government and collective control over [the] economy based on freedom, equality and solidarity."

An American audience may associate anarchist communists in Russia with Leninist or Stalinist political traditions, but the group was clear to differentiate its methods and ideology from Marxist-Leninists.

"We do not need dictators, presidents and parliaments," they explained. "We are against parliamentarianism even in 'democratic' states."

Marxist-Leninists advocate seizing state power to bring about a stateless classless society, while anarchists argue that these methods ultimately reproduce the hierarchical structures that revolutionaries oppose when party officials inevitably become a new ruling class.

Instead, [anarchist communists](#) work toward building power from below by developing decentralized, non-hierarchical voluntary networks. Groups or communities within a network, sometimes called a [federation](#), each have their own unique set of decision-making structures, economic and social arrangements, yet they reinforce each other in mutually beneficial ways. Higher order units within a federation may be created to administer and coordinate certain tasks, but they do not impose orders on lower-units like a hierarchical government does.

The group says that these direct actions mirror the anarchist ethos of people taking matters into their own hands, without permission from authority figures.

“[T]he parliamentary struggle in modern Russia is not only impossible, it contradicts the anarchist principle of the direct involvement of people into the transformation of society, [and] teaches people to trust ‘professional political experts,’” the BOAK spokesperson wrote. “Direct action, on the contrary, is an instrument to overcome alienation, it teaches people to participate in decision-making, to rely on their own strengths, and not just wait [for] orders from the privileged Minority.”

Of course, taking direct action against a heavily-armed state is extremely dangerous. Russian authorities often [torture dissidents](#) and [sentence anti-war activists to lengthy prison terms](#). Vladimir Sergeev and Anton Zhuchov, for example, [face up to ten years in prison](#) for bringing molotov cocktails to an anti-war demonstration. While detained they both attempted to commit suicide, but survived after being hospitalized and were arrested once again.

The actions of groups like BOAK parallel militant acts taken by political dissidents around the world. In the United States, [anarchist political prisoner Eric King](#) is serving a ten-year sentence for throwing a molotov cocktail at a politician’s empty office in solidarity with the 2014 Black liberation uprisings in Ferguson, Missouri. [Josh Williams](#) was sentenced to eight years for lighting a trash can on fire during the Ferguson uprisings. And an innumerable number of protesters arrested during the George Floyd uprising have been [sentenced](#) to years [behind bars](#). In May 2022, Brittany Martin was [sentenced to four years in prison](#) for allegedly yelling at a cop during a small demonstration in South Carolina.

BOAK is encouraging people around the globe to show solidarity for prisoners of war in Russia, and continue to pay attention to the atrocities committed in Eastern Europe even though the war is no longer front-and-center of the news cycle.

“We would just ask your readers not to turn a blind eye towards the events in Eastern Europe,” they wrote. “An effect of this battle definitely will reach far beyond its region. The forces who fight totalitarian regimes here need your support and participation.”

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HEADLINE	<b>09/01 Ukraine soldiers: advancing but at a cost</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/ukrainian-soldiers-say-they-are-advancing-in-the-south-but-at-a-cost-11661983338?mod=hp_lead_pos5">https://www.wsj.com/articles/ukrainian-soldiers-say-they-are-advancing-in-the-south-but-at-a-cost-11661983338?mod=hp_lead_pos5</a>
GIST	<p>Ukrainian army units pushing toward Kherson in the south are retaking ground held for months by Russia’s invading troops amid extremely fierce fighting, according to Ukrainian soldiers taking part in <a href="#">the offensive</a>.</p> <p>Russian soldiers seemed well equipped and were putting up stiff resistance, the Ukrainians said.</p> <p>“They’re throwing everything against us,” said a 22-year-old Ukrainian soldier who said Russians were fighting with artillery, tanks, helicopters and mortars. “They have a lot of equipment but few men.”</p> <p>Interviews with eight soldiers who took part in fighting—and were being treated for injuries at a hospital behind the front lines—offered the most detailed on-the-ground picture yet from an offensive that Ukraine hopes will <a href="#">help it seize the initiative</a> in the conflict and show its Western backers, and its own people, that its military can take on Moscow’s army and win.</p> <p>Ukrainian officials are saying little publicly about the offensive, citing the need for secrecy in military operations.</p> <p>The Pentagon’s assessment, given at a briefing by its spokesman Wednesday, appeared to support the soldiers’ cautious optimism.</p> <p>“We are aware of Ukrainian military operations that have made some forward movement, and in some cases in the Kherson region we are aware of Russian units falling back,” Air Force Brig. Gen. Patrick Ryder told reporters.</p>

The soldiers and medics at a hospital in southern Ukraine agreed to speak on condition that their identities and location wouldn't be revealed. All took part in the offensive that began Monday with the aim of seizing the initiative in the war.

The attacks Monday at several points along the front lines came after weeks of softening-up Russian forces with long-range rocket attacks.

Ukraine's long-awaited thrust in the south is advancing into territory that the Russians occupied in the early days of their invasion, according to soldiers who took part in fighting. But it is a hard slog against a well-equipped enemy, they said.

Ivan, a 32-year-old private, said his unit's task was simple: "Go in, f—them up, retake what's ours."

He said the offensive started well for his unit, which seized a village from the Russians in the early hours of fighting.

But that same day, Monday, he wound up in hospital with a concussion after a teammate fired a rocket launcher a few steps from where he stood.

"The guys are in a fighting mood," said Ivan, a former construction worker from southwest Ukraine. "They're moving forward."

Some Russian troops are fleeing their positions, he said, abandoning equipment and booby-trapping the bodies of dead comrades they leave behind. Ivan showed footage that he said was sent to him by comrades on the front line, appearing to show dead Russian soldiers on the outskirts of a village that he said was seized by Ukrainian forces on Tuesday.

Ivan said Ukrainian forces had thrust toward Kherson, the regional capital, and were trying to clear villages along the way.

Russian military bloggers who are close to the country's Defense Ministry have noted another Ukrainian advance, across the Inhulets River to the northeast of Kherson. The Russian Defense Ministry has described Ukraine's offensive as a failure.

"We're advancing in some areas and being battered in others," said Pavlo, a 22-year-old soldier who was concussed in a battle on Tuesday and says he now hears a sound akin to a broken television in his head.

The head of the intensive-care unit where some of the soldiers were being treated said the military warned him of the offensive a week in advance, spurring hopes of imminent victories.

"But when they started bringing in such a large number of wounded, then, honestly, I felt sorry for them and I started wondering if this was worth doing at such a cost," said the doctor. "I don't know. There's no right answer here."

Ukrainian officials and military analysts have said that Ukrainian losses, even if the offensive is successful, could be high as they are assaulting an entrenched enemy with significant firepower that can quickly chew up troops.

At the intensive-care unit, six servicemen in comas occupied beds in two adjoining wards separated by a thin wall. In one, doctors were fighting to save the life of a 47-year-old armor crewman badly injured when his tank was hit Tuesday, his chest heaving as surgeons performed a tracheotomy in a bid to restore his breathing.



One Ukrainian soldier lay in his bed clutching the Russian bullet that had just been plucked from his body after traveling through his left shoulder and exiting through his pelvis. He was shot as he lay on the ground seeking cover from a Russian attack in a village.

“We had a feeling that we’d be going into battle, that we were planning something big,” the 30-year-old soldier, Petro, said of the days that preceded the offensive as he struggled to speak under the influence of heavy anesthesia. “We all hope the war ends as soon as possible.”

The doctor said he spends some nights on a small couch in his office after more than half his staff stopped coming to work following a Russian rocket attack on the hospital in August. He said he felt on the verge of a breakdown as he has dealt with more soldiers than at any time since the first weeks of the war.

Faced with the influx, doctors are fighting to save the lives of those in critical condition before sending them on to better-equipped hospitals once they are stable.

The head of the intensive-care unit said that on Monday he took in a 27-year-old soldier with a broken leg, concussion, torn lung and a ruptured liver, stomach, colon and bowel. “Head, chest, limbs, stomach, concussions, they come with all kinds of injuries,” he said. “The effect of an explosion damages everything.”

But among the injured, the doctor said he was most struck by their desire to continue fighting as soon as they are physically able.

Ivan, the 32-year-old private, said his concussion on Monday was his third since he was mobilized at the start of Russia’s invasion, and it was only because his commander ordered him evacuated that he ended up at the hospital.

“I want to get back to our guys,” he said, playing down his injuries despite struggling to hear. “I wanted to return the moment I left.”

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HEADLINE	08/31 DOJ: likely obstruction in documents probe
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/donald-trump-bolsters-florida-legal-team-11661870344?mod=hp_trending_now_article_pos2">https://www.wsj.com/articles/donald-trump-bolsters-florida-legal-team-11661870344?mod=hp_trending_now_article_pos2</a>
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON—The Justice Department said “efforts were likely taken to obstruct the government’s investigation” of documents at former President <a href="#">Donald Trump</a>’s Mar-a-Lago home months before <a href="#">FBI agents searched the Florida estate</a> in early August.</p> <p><a href="#">A court filing late Tuesday</a> objecting to Mr. Trump’s proposal that the <a href="#">seized documents</a> be vetted by a <a href="#">third-party arbiter</a> laid out the government’s most detailed timeline yet of the events that led to the unprecedented search of the premises, in which investigators said they found records in places other than the storage room where Mr. Trump’s lawyers had assured them all were held.</p> <p><a href="#">The 36-page document</a> underscored the urgency with which the Justice Department believed it needed to secure the classified material after Mr. Trump’s team failed to relinquish all of it during several less invasive attempts to retrieve it earlier this year.</p> <p>Those steps included a grand jury subpoena issued to Mr. Trump’s team in May seeking all classified documents from the premises.</p> <p>According to the government’s filing, a representative of Mr. Trump handed over an accordion folder of documents when FBI agents visited the Palm Beach property on June 3. Another representative then attested in writing that the team had supplied “any and all documents that are responsive to the subpoena,” according to the filing.</p>



Further investigation showed that not to be the case, the Justice Department said.

“The FBI uncovered multiple sources of evidence indicating that the response to the May 11 grand jury subpoena was incomplete and that classified documents remained at the Premises, notwithstanding the sworn certification made to the government on June 3,” the filing said.

“The government also developed evidence that government records were likely concealed and removed from the Storage Room and that efforts were likely taken to obstruct the government’s investigation,” the Justice Department said.

A spokesman for Mr. Trump didn’t immediately return a request seeking comment.

Two lawyers for Mr. Trump, Evan Corcoran and Christina Bobb, were at Mar-a-Lago on June 3. No one present on that day said Mr. Trump had declassified documents or asserted any claim of executive privilege, the Justice Department wrote in the filing, casting doubt on arguments his team has advanced in weeks since the seizure.

The Aug. 8 search, in which agents carted away more than two dozen boxes including 11 sets of classified documents, set off a furious political response, with some GOP lawmakers rallying around the former president as he signals he might make another bid for the White House in 2024.

The government said the FBI on Aug. 8 seized “more than twice the amount produced on June 3, 2022, in response to the grand jury subpoena.” The Tuesday filing included a photo showing pages marked “TOP SECRET” spread out on a carpet next to a box holding items including a framed Time magazine cover.

“In some instances, even the FBI counterintelligence personnel and DOJ attorneys conducting the review required additional clearances before they were permitted to review certain documents,” the filing said.

U.S. District Judge Aileen Cannon has scheduled a Thursday hearing on Mr. Trump’s Aug. 22 motion asking for the appointment of a special master—an arbiter who reviews evidence and decides whether some materials are protected by legal doctrines like attorney-client privilege.

Mr. Trump’s legal team will be led by Chris Kise, a former Florida solicitor general with deep ties to the GOP whose appointment became public on Tuesday.

The Justice Department has opposed the special-master request on multiple grounds, including that “the former President lacks standing to seek judicial relief or oversight as to Presidential records because those records do not belong to him.”

Tuesday’s filing also reiterated that a group of lawyers and investigators known as a filter team had already segregated any documents that are [potentially subject to attorney-client privilege](#). The filter team is separate from the team handling the Justice Department’s continuing criminal investigation.

Investigators have “already reviewed all of the remaining materials, including any that are potentially subject to claims of executive privilege,” the Justice Department said in Tuesday’s filing.

The hiring of Mr. Kise comes amid internal discussions in the former president’s circle over the quality of his legal team. A number of lawyers have been contacted recently to work on the case but have declined, the people said.

Thursday’s hearing on the special-master request is the first legal battle facing Mr. Kise, who has a deal to join Mr. Trump’s team and is leaving his firm, Foley & Lardner, to do so, according to one of the people familiar with the matter. He has successfully argued cases before the U.S. Supreme Court. Long active in GOP politics, Mr. Kise worked on the transition teams of Govs. Rick Scott and Ron DeSantis.

	<p>He became solicitor general under then-Florida Attorney General Charlie Crist, then a Republican, who went on to become governor and is now vacating a U.S. House seat to run as a Democrat against Mr. DeSantis in November.</p> <p>Several lawyers turned down the job because they didn't think Mr. Trump would follow their legal advice and were concerned about his reputation for not paying his legal bills, according to people familiar with the matter.</p> <p>The addition of Mr. Kise to the legal team means Mr. Trump will have a seasoned lawyer with Florida experience, including in the Southern District, where the court case is playing out. NBC News earlier Tuesday reported the hiring.</p> <p>"He's a very serious lawyer and knows his way around government and the political world," said Bob Martinez, a lawyer with the litigation firm Colson Hicks Eidson and a former U.S. attorney for the Southern District of Florida appointed by President George H.W. Bush.</p> <p>"I'm hoping that this matter can be resolved amicably," Mr. Martinez added. "My guess is this was never about investigating a case to ultimately prosecute criminally. I think this was always about getting the records back. I hope that's where it will end."</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/31 US maritime drone operation aims at Iran</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/inside-a-u-s-navy-maritime-drone-operation-aimed-at-iran-11661954273?mod=lead_feature_below_a_pos1">https://www.wsj.com/articles/inside-a-u-s-navy-maritime-drone-operation-aimed-at-iran-11661954273?mod=lead_feature_below_a_pos1</a>
GIST	<p>MANAMA, Bahrain—The U.S. Navy is working with Israel, Saudi Arabia and other Middle Eastern nations to build a network of unmanned drones as it seeks to constrain Iran's military in the region—a program the Pentagon hopes will be a model for operations around the world.</p> <p>A ship operated by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps <a href="#">attempted to seize an American maritime drone</a>—equipped with cameras, radar and other sensors—but abandoned that effort on Tuesday when a U.S. warship and helicopter approached, U.S. officials said.</p> <p>U.S. officers declined to disclose the number of aerial and maritime drones deployed by the U.S. and its allies or to give details about where and how they are used, saying that information is classified. But they said the unmanned vessels and aircraft are giving them better visibility over the region's waters.</p> <p>By next summer, the Navy said, it expects to have 100 small surveillance drones—contributed by various countries—operating from the Suez Canal in Egypt to waters off the Iranian coast and feeding information to a command center in Bahrain, headquarters of the U.S. Fifth Fleet.</p> <p>"I think we are truly on the cusp of an unmanned technological revolution," said Capt. Michael Brasseur, who heads the U.S. Navy task force working to build the drone fleet in the Middle East.</p> <p>The drone initiative, now in its sixth month, is part of a burgeoning cooperative relationship among the U.S., Israel and Gulf nations following <a href="#">the Abraham Accords</a>. It mirrors another U.S.-led effort to unite Israel and its Gulf neighbors to create a regional air-defense network.</p> <p>From the Robotic Operation Center here in Manama, U.S. Navy personnel and private contractors monitor the drones' progress. Video screens display blinking red alerts when the drones identify "dark targets" or suspected threats.</p> <p>The drones—some of which can float at sea for up to six months—can send back detailed images and other data. Analysts review the images and try to determine what they show.</p>

Vice Adm. Brad Cooper, the commander spearheading the effort, said the fleet has proven its value by detecting activity such as a Chinese naval ship moving through the area, suspicious ship-to-ship transfers and vessels using electronic trackers to disguise their identities.

“We’ve been able to detect activity that we simply did not know was previously happening,” he said.

The drones now being tested are unarmed. But defense analysts expect the Navy to move toward equipping some with weapons in the future—something that would likely prompt intense debate.

U.S. lawmakers have raised concerns about Navy plans to build larger unmanned ships, a program that could cost billions of dollars. And the military still has to determine how to make use of smaller drones, protect them from attack and act on the information they transmit.

The U.S. drone operations come as there is mounting concern about Iran’s expanding influence in one of the world’s most important economic thoroughfares. Tehran has deployed ships and submarines equipped with aerial drones and has warned it is prepared to use them.

“If the enemies make a mistake, these drones will present them with a regrettable response,” Abdolrahim Mousavi, an Iranian army commander, told reporters during a recent visit by President Biden to the region.

The U.S. accused Iran of [using drones to target an Israeli-affiliated merchant tanker](#) off the coast of Iran last year in an attack that killed two crew members. Iran said it didn’t carry out the strike.

In July, Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz said Iran’s forces were “a direct threat to international trade, energy supply and the global economy.”

According to people familiar with the operations, Israel last year struck an Iranian cargo ship suspected of spying in the Red Sea. The explosion crippled the ship and Iran sent a replacement.

When an Iranian ship was discovered Tuesday towing one of the U.S. Navy’s 23-foot Saildrones that was conducting surveillance in the central Persian Gulf, U.S. forces warned the vessel that the drone was U.S. property. The Iranians dropped the tow line and eventually left the area, they said.

On Wednesday, the IRGC Navy called the U.S. military’s version of the incident “ridiculous,” according to Iranian state television. The IRGC said it took control of the U.S. vessel to prevent “unsafe sailing” and decided to release it after warning the U.S. Navy to not let such “illegal behavior” happen again.

Earlier this year, the U.S. created a new military task force to focus on the Red Sea. Israel, which established diplomatic relations with Bahrain in 2020 as part of the U.S.-brokered Abraham Accords, has, for the first time, a military adviser working out of the Fifth Fleet headquarters in Manama.

The U.S. Navy is testing a range of unmanned craft, including one that looks like a speedboat and can reach speeds of nearly 90 miles an hour. It is also working with Predator-style aerial drones and the Saildrone, which can stay at sea for six months.

The true test of the drones will be whether they provide intelligence that leads to action—such as the seizure of contraband cargo.

“Just watching alone might limit Iran’s behavior,” said Stacie Pettyjohn, director of the Defense Program at the Center for a New American Security. “But if they realize that they are not going to follow through and do anything, it may not be much of a deterrent.”

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SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/choosing-your-own-hours-isnt-just-for-remote-workers-anymore-11661938202?mod=hp_major_pos2#cxrecs_s">https://www.wsj.com/articles/choosing-your-own-hours-isnt-just-for-remote-workers-anymore-11661938202?mod=hp_major_pos2#cxrecs_s</a>
GIST	<p>It isn't just remote workers who have gained leverage over when they work.</p> <p>Shift workers such as assemblers and hotel maids are also getting more flexibility to set their own hours as the pandemic and the <a href="#">historically tight labor market</a> change the economy.</p> <p>Manufacturers, hotels, warehouses and restaurants are allowing new hires to work just a few days a week, take on four-hour shifts or even choose new hours daily using phone apps, according to the companies, job boards and economists.</p> <p>The U.S. job market has remained strong with few signs it is weakening as the Federal Reserve <a href="#">raises interest rates</a> to curb inflation. The unemployment rate was 3.5% in July—matching a 50-year low—meaning that many people <a href="#">have more leverage</a> when it comes to getting jobs than before, despite an increase in layoff announcements from companies like <a href="#">Ford Motor</a> Co., <a href="#">Walmart</a> Inc. and <a href="#">Robinhood Markets</a> Inc.</p> <p>Over the past 12 months, 11% of postings for in-person jobs offered flexible hours, according to the online job board <a href="#">ZipRecruiter</a>. The flexible openings typically peak in the run-up to the Christmas season as retailers and warehouses staff up. In October, 29% of job listings offered flexibility. One recent posting for a home health aide in Boston advertised weekly paychecks and custom schedules: “Choose your own hours!”</p> <p>Professors at the University of Chicago estimated in 2020 that 37% of jobs can be done fully remotely. In-person workers can't work from home, but they can start working different hours.</p> <p>“Those on-site workers need to be doing their jobs either in person or on-site,” said Sinem Buber, the lead economist for ZipRecruiter. “They are looking for the flexibility we have as well.”</p> <p>While the percentage of such postings has declined in recent months, Ms. Buber said it remained above prepandemic levels, with the pullback <a href="#">coming from retailers</a>. “This isn't going away,” she said. “We aren't going back to 2019 when it comes to work arrangements.”</p> <p>The spread of flexible working hours is also being driven by workers who want part-time positions. In July, 20.7 million people were in part-time jobs of their own choosing, according to the Labor Department, while 3.9 million part-time workers said they were looking for full-time work. The proportion of the whole labor force that is choosing to work part-time hours is at its highest since early 2020.</p> <p>Companies said they are offering different types of working arrangements for in-person jobs because it allows them to tap into new pools of labor and because workers are demanding it. The higher percentage of single mothers and an aging population resulting in elderly parents means that many working-age people have additional caretaking responsibilities, according to economists.</p> <p><a href="#">Amazon.com</a> Inc. said more than 100,000 of its employees have used its “Anytime Shifts” program to book their own work hours. Logistics supplier Geodis Group said more than 110,000 hours of work have been done using the company's flexible shift program on a phone app called <a href="#">Shyft</a>. The app allows factory and manufacturing operations to function similarly to gig-economy roles like <a href="#">Uber</a> drivers. Geodis posts dozens of open shifts a week, allowing workers to choose positions based on the pay rate and the hours.</p> <p>Clothing retailer <a href="#">Gap</a> Inc. has hundreds of part-time warehouse workers choosing their hours on Shyft. Gap and other companies say workers themselves are asking for part-time, flexible work. Many companies prefer to offer workers full-time positions.</p> <p>“There's a growing population of people in which flexibility is paramount,” said Kevin Releford, a logistics executive at the Gap. “You aren't going to force someone who wants maximum flexibility to work a full-time schedule.”</p>

The hotel industry views the rise of nontraditional shifts as an advantage compared with other industries because many hotels are open around the clock. “It’s not a nine-to-five job,” said Michael Jacobson, president of the Illinois Hotel & Lodging Association. “We have shifts starting every hour of the day.”

Manufacturing executives are scouring their production lines looking for jobs that can be done during off-hours. Office furniture maker Haworth Inc. found roles that use stand-alone machines to build extra parts that are then used by workers on assembly lines, according to Chief Operating Officer Kevin Bailey. “Before it was just very cookie cutter. We work this shift. It’s these hours. Here’s a start time,” he said. “Today, you better compete for what they want to do.”

Renee Jumper helps make washing machines two nights a week at the GE Appliances factory in Louisville, Ky. This schedule allows her to cook dinner for her 9-year-old daughter and take her teenage son to a studio to make music.

Ms. Jumper works every Sunday and Thursday night 10 p.m. to 6 a.m., making around \$19 an hour. Typical 24-hour factory operations have three eight-hour shifts. Working two nights a week helps Ms. Jumper save money as it allows her to avoid paying for child care and to prepare meals in advance instead of going to restaurants. She is thinking about adding a third weekly shift.

Ms. Jumper doesn’t get complete benefits, like health insurance, as her full-time co-workers do. She said the extra hours with her children make up for that. “It gives me more flexibility with family, to spend time with my daughter and to do meal planning and prepping,” she said.

Anthony Salazar-Masias, of Ontario, Calif., uses Amazon’s phone application to take on additional hours or switch shifts if he is busy. Mr. Salazar-Masias typically works 10-hour shifts Wednesday through Saturday on the inbound dock in a company warehouse in nearby Eastvale, Calif. He recently was able to switch his Saturday shift to a Tuesday so he could attend his nephew’s 10th birthday party. He also uses the app to pick up additional overtime shifts.

“They offer accommodations for whatever I need,” he said. “It’s a really big benefit, being able to make your schedule work with whatever things you have going on in your life.”

Economists said shorter, part-time work could help draw more types of workers into the labor pool, boosting their incomes. However, there is a potential downside to the economy if people who only work once or twice a week produce relatively less than full-time workers.

Output per hour of labor across the economy has declined for three of the past four quarters through the second quarter of 2022, the first such decline in nearly 40 years.

Carola Frydman, a Northwestern University economics professor, said women in particular value the new working arrangements. She said the impact on productivity depends on the type of work involved.

“Can we produce the goods in an efficient way? That will vary a lot depending on what the nature of the job is,” she said. “If the job is being a barista, as long as I know how to make the coffee, that doesn’t matter if I’m there for two hours or six hours. The quality of the coffee I produce doesn’t really change.”

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HEADLINE	09/01 Russia ‘filtration’ system for Ukrainians
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/09/01/russia-ukraine-filtration-forced-transfer/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/09/01/russia-ukraine-filtration-forced-transfer/</a>
GIST	Moscow and its separatist allies in Ukraine have forcibly transferred hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians to Russia since the start of the war, according to U.S. officials and human rights investigators, sending many through a vast and punitive “filtration” system that includes detentions, interrogations and mass data collection.

The system operates in Russian-occupied areas and is overseen by the Kremlin, which is using “advanced technology” to gather data on Ukrainian citizens, a State Department official said in a briefing with reporters on Wednesday.

In recent days, two reports — from the New York-based Human Rights Watch and Yale University’s Humanitarian Research Lab — have shed new light on the scale of the filtration network and its impact on civilians. Both reports say there is evidence the system violates the laws of war.

The forcible transfer or deportation of civilians from occupied territory is prohibited under the [Geneva Conventions](#), which regulate the conduct of armed conflict. Moscow denies allegations it has forcibly relocated residents — instead claiming that Russian forces are “protecting” civilians from Ukrainian troops.

“We do have information that officials from Russia’s presidential administration are overseeing and coordinating these filtration operations,” Emma Gilligan, a senior expert with the State Department’s Office of Global Criminal Justice, told reporters Wednesday.

“We also know that Russia is using advanced technology to facilitate filtration processes, including for the purposes of collecting data on Ukrainian citizens,” she said.

In its report released Thursday, Human Rights Watch described the filtration system in Ukraine as a “mass illegal data collection exercise” with “no legal underpinnings.”

Residents are funneled to registration sites, where they are screened and released or detained. Some Ukrainians have disappeared, according to Human Rights Watch, or were deported to Russia without identification documents.

Ukrainians who go through the system have had their phone contacts downloaded, fingerprints and photographs taken and passport numbers collected, according to the Yale report, which was published last week.

The researchers said they found “with high confidence” that Russian and allied forces in the Donetsk region of eastern Ukraine have used 21 sites for “filtration operations.”

The sites include registration points, temporary holding facilities, interrogation centers and prisons for long-term detention.

The scale of the filtration system is “significant,” Nathaniel Raymond, executive director of the Humanitarian Research Lab, said at the same briefing with reporters on Wednesday. The lab’s report is part of the Conflict Observatory, a State Department-supported initiative to document Russian war crimes in Ukraine.

One of the locations identified by the report includes a school in Bezimenne, a village east of Mariupol. In May, The Washington Post [geolocated video clips](#) showing the school, where men forcibly taken from Mariupol were detained, made to sleep on the floor and threatened with torture and execution, according to a Telegram post accompanying the footage.

Satellite images and videos also [verified by The Post](#) in March showed Russian-backed forces building a tent city in the area. Russian authorities described it at the time as a “life-supporting” center for refugees from Mariupol, while Ukrainian leaders accused Russia of taking residents to “filtration camps” against their will.

According to Human Rights Watch, some Ukrainians traveled to Russia voluntarily, including men who wanted to avoid martial law in Ukraine, which bars most military-age men from leaving the country.



	<p>It remains unclear exactly how many Ukrainians have been deported to Russia, or even subjected to the “filtration” screening process. In July, Secretary of State Antony Blinken <a href="#">said</a> that Russia had deported 900,000 to 1.6 million Ukrainian citizens — and that many of those “forcibly deported,” including 260,000 children, have ended up in Russia’s Far East.</p> <p>In late June, Ukrainian Deputy Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk put the number of Ukrainians forcibly moved to Russia at 1.2 million, while Russia has said nearly 2.5 million Ukrainian “refugees” had moved to the country.</p> <p>Still, much remains unknown about the filtration system, including how Russian authorities are using the data they collect and where many who were detained or transferred to Russia have ended up.</p> <p>“This report is really to serve as a foundation for further investigation, advocacy and hopefully access by the international community to these sites that constitute, to be clear, a human rights emergency,” Raymond said.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/31 London homeless rough sleeping on buses</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.vice.com/en/article/pkqknz/london-homeless-night-bus-cost-of-living">https://www.vice.com/en/article/pkqknz/london-homeless-night-bus-cost-of-living</a>
GIST	<p>The number of people found sleeping rough on night buses in London has risen almost fourfold over the last decade, according to new figures seen by VICE World News.</p> <p>The Transport for London (TfL) data, revealed under Freedom of Information laws, shows that there were 2,042 reports by drivers of people sleeping rough on night buses between April 2020 and March last year, compared to 525 nine years ago. It found the number had jumped by 83 percent in the last four years.</p> <p>Experts said <a href="#">those found sleeping on night buses</a> include a higher than average proportion of female and <a href="#">older</a> rough sleepers. They fear the number of people using London’s night buses as a temporary home could rocket in the winter as spiraling energy bills push people living in poverty to seek emergency sources of shelter.</p> <p>The UK is in an escalating cost-of-living crisis, with energy bills expected to rocket by 80 percent in October. Earlier this month <a href="#">research</a> by the University of York revealed two-thirds of UK households – 45 million people – will be trapped in fuel poverty by January. A huge rise in the cost of gas and electricity is set to push UK inflation to 18 per cent next year, <a href="#">according to a report from Citigroup</a>.</p> <p>According to the data, the bus route with the highest number of rough sleepers was the N15, a three-hour round trip between Romford in the east of the city and Oxford Circus in the centre.</p> <p>Homeless agencies said the popularity of a night bus route for rough sleepers is linked to its length and the areas it travels through. The N15 is one of the longest routes, which goes through some of the poorest parts of east London to key rough sleeping hotspots in the West End, including Charing Cross and Trafalgar Square.</p> <p>London’s night buses, notorious for carrying passengers who are drunk and noisy, are unsafe places, especially for young people and women to seek shelter and sleep. Reports of sexual harassment on public transport almost doubled in the four years up to 2018.</p> <p>Centrepont, a charity helping young homeless people in London, found one in 10 of the 18 to 25-year-olds it helps had spent a night on a bus <a href="#">because they had nowhere else to stay</a>.</p> <p>“For many of the young people we support who have found themselves in similar situations a bus can feel safer than being outside on the streets,” said Billy Harding, policy and research manager at Centrepont. “In reality, however, even a well-lit and CCTV-monitored bus is no place for a young person and they can still find themselves exposed to verbal, physical and sexual assault.”</p>



Harding said things were about to get worse. “The worry we have is that, with rising energy bills and other costs, we are only just seeing the beginning of a trend here.”

Part of the reason more rough sleepers are being found on the capital’s night buses is because a greater effort is being made to seek out and help them. In 2017, after [a leaked TfL report in 2016 found a 121 percent rise in rough sleeping on night buses in four years](#), TfL agreed to fund a £300,000 Night Team outreach team to find and assist those seeking shelter on London’s late night buses and Tube lines.

Bill Tidnam, chief executive at London charity Thames Reach, which runs the team, said it works with bus and Tube drivers “to increase awareness and reporting, to allow us to find and work with more people to help them into accommodation and away from homelessness”.

The [team](#) found women and older people are overrepresented in rough sleeping bus statistics compared to the rough sleeping population as a whole. Tidnam said: “The people they find on night buses tends to be a higher proportion of women, older people and those with mental health and substance abuse problems.”

The data comes as rough sleeping is on the increase in London, and deaths among the most vulnerable of the 274,000 homeless people in England are spiralling.

According to the latest statistics from the Combined Homelessness and Information Network, 2,998 people were seen sleeping rough in the capital between April and June this year – a 16 per cent increase on the same period last year.

In 2021, it was found the number of rough sleepers dying in the UK had jumped by 80 percent in two years. In 2016 Joseph Agnew, a homeless man found sleeping on a night bus after it reached its destination in Peckham, south London died shortly after he was taken off by police and propped up against a bus shelter.

“In no society should it be accepted that hundreds of people must spend their nights moving from bus to bus because they do not have somewhere safe to sleep at night,” said Matt Downie, chief executive of Crisis, the UK’s national homelessness charity.

“Now with energy bills soaring to previously unimaginable figures, inflation mounting and rents becoming simply unaffordable we’re at risk of seeing more people pushed into this situation if nothing is done.”

Downie said that given the government introduced emergency measures to help the homeless temporarily off the streets during the pandemic, “there is no reason why this cannot be done now”.

“Ultimately we need to move beyond short term solutions and get to grips with tackling the root causes forcing people into homelessness in the first place. This means building the affordable homes we desperately need and investing in housing benefit so people can pay their rent.”

TfL said bus drivers are required to call London’s 24-hour bus control centre if they see a rough sleeper on their bus who is aggressive, needs urgent medical attention or is suspected to be under 18. Drivers report rough sleepers on their bus via text message. “TfL is committed to working with the Mayor’s Office and homeless charities to identify and support rough sleepers that seek refuge on the transport system. Our staff regularly intervene and provide valuable assistance to anyone that needs help.”

A spokesperson for London Mayor Sadiq Khan said the rise in people found rough sleeping on buses was down to “an increase in reporting of cases and the continued impact of Government policies such as cuts to social security on some of the most vulnerable Londoners.”

They added: “While those sleeping rough on public transport are only part of the picture on rough sleeping in London, it’s clear there is much more to do, particularly with cost of living pressures hitting Londoners hard.

	“The mayor continues to urge ministers to take urgent steps to prevent hardship and homelessness this winter, including freezing private sector rents, funding the services and social security system that people sleeping rough need, and stepping up wider support to combat the cost-of-living crisis.”
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HEADLINE	<b>08/31 Myth: Russia’s million-man army</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.usnews.com/news/world-report/articles/2022-08-31/how-russian-corruption-is-foiling-putins-army-in-ukraine">https://www.usnews.com/news/world-report/articles/2022-08-31/how-russian-corruption-is-foiling-putins-army-in-ukraine</a>
GIST	<p>When Russia moved 85% of all of its land forces toward and into Ukraine to break the <a href="#">stubborn and unforeseen local resistance</a>, one thing became obvious: the move yielded a fighting force far smaller than the assessments of the country’s vaunted million-man army.</p> <p>The Kremlin previously stated it could field a total of 900,000 active duty troops, with Russian President Vladimir Putin now <a href="#">calling on his military to grow by 10%</a> as a tacit admission of the problems it faces in its war in Ukraine. Questionable organizational decisions in the Russian military and a series of misguided political assumptions hampered the fighting force from the outset.</p> <p>But those missteps are inflamed by widespread corruption within the Russian military, officials and analysts say, such as common practices among recruiters of overstating the number of enlistees they say they signed up to skim funding for the difference. The Pentagon now believes Russian dysfunction will prevent it from reaching even its recruitment goals from before the invasion, let alone expand its military to more than 1 million troops.</p> <p>“It goes back to Russia’s assumption from the beginning that they wouldn’t be fighting a war, they would be welcomed,” says Dara Massicot, a specialist in Russia military capabilities previously at the Defense Department, now at the Rand Corp. think tank. “They thought they could get away with this.”</p> <p>Graft in the Russian military, particularly during its Soviet history, is not a new phenomenon nor is it limited to an accounting of the number of troops it can field. Assessments of its recent interventions in Chechnya and Georgia included descriptions of deadly vulnerabilities to its fighting vehicles and other equipment, likely caused by purposeful misreporting to siphon ministry dollars, feigned negligence, outright theft and other endemically corrupt practices.</p> <p>But Russian President Vladimir Putin’s decision in February to invade Ukraine on a scale unseen in Europe since World War II has for the first time exposed the full extent to which corruption in Russia has rotted its Ministry of Defense. Corrupt practices have hollowed out not only the armor of its tanks but also the true numbers of its fighting forces, its ability to equip its front-line troops as well as for its top commanders to provide honest assessments of the state of the materiel and active duty and reserve forces they oversee.</p> <p>“These are the kinds of things that are the result of either total incompetence or corruption: false reporting, people signing off on things that actually don’t meet standards, and of course the individual Russian soldier. It’s legendary the stealing that they do,” says retired Army Lt. Gen. Ben Hodges who last oversaw all U.S. Army operations in Europe, beginning in 2014 when Russia first annexed Crimea and kicked off the ongoing violence in Ukraine’s east, a region known as the Donbas.</p> <p>“It’s corruption from the top,” Hodges says, referencing Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu’s conspicuously lavish \$18 million mansion, “down to the individual Russian soldier.”</p> <p>The six months of conflict since Russia invaded on Feb. 24 are rife with other examples of its military’s long-standing corrupt practices and how they have undermined what Mosow initially believed would amount to an uncontested thunder run on Kyiv.</p>

Russia's T-80 battle tanks like those it deployed into Ukraine are designed to be protected with defensive system known as explosive reactive armor or ERA, a series of boxes that are supposed to be filled with layers of metal and rubber plates along with high explosives that, when functional, effectively prevent an incoming round from penetrating the tank's skin.

Instead, Ukrainian troops inspecting the carcasses of the invading tanks they destroyed have documented several instances in which this critical lifesaving technology had been hollowed out, with only some of the requisite components intact and no evidence that the relatively valuable explosives had ever been there – certainly not since the Russians first engaged in battle.

In a particularly embarrassing episode, many of the columns that first advanced on the Ukrainian capital stopped short miles outside the city limits not because of stiff local resistance but because they ran out of fuel. Reports emerged almost immediately that the hang-up was caused in part by logistics convoys that similarly never arrived because of their own insufficient supply or because they were blown up. Or, more nefariously, that Russia never possessed the levels of fuel it believed it had because much of it had been sold on the black market at staging sites in Belarus.

Russia was unable to field enough infantry troops to provide dismounted patrols to clear routes for its heavier armored vehicles, which instead were destroyed by ground-based Ukrainian anti-tank teams. And tanks that were supposed to boast a complement of five crew members often instead had three, undermining their ability to perform effectively after coming into contact with enemy forces.

Analysts now believe Russia's senior military leaders likely hid the readiness problems they knew their formations faced in part due to the secrecy surrounding the invasion plans.

Part of the problem Russia faces now is that it has successfully appeared to be able to field an effective military in recent years, notably through its interventions along its border but also in relatively faraway locales like Syria. There, though, its mission to prop up the regime of Bashar Assad and undermine the disjointed U.S. presence only needed an air force and 2,000 to 3,000 ground troops.

"Operations in Syria were not incompetent, were not unsuccessful, but that's a very small force," Massicot says. "You can hide a lot of these problems."

"But when you do something in Ukraine, when you have a majority of your army in the field, you can't."

The U.S. military assesses that as many as a third of deployed Russian vehicles have failed on their own, due in large part to unenforced maintenance practices at their home bases. Reports have emerged that its troops are eating expired rations, likely because logisticians either sold the replacements or never used dispersed money to buy them in the first place.

The Russian Embassy in Washington, D.C. did not respond to a request for comment. The Kremlin has been notoriously tight-lipped about any shortcoming among its forces since the invasion began. It denies, for example, that a Ukrainian counteroffensive in Kherson near the Crimean Peninsula was in fact occurring as of Wednesday midday.

However, in a tacit acknowledgement of his armed forces' shortcomings and the need to endure its operations in the long term, Putin last week ordered the military to increase its size by roughly 10%, adding to Russian accounting of its current numbers of around 1 million combat forces to create a new total of roughly 1,150,000 troops.

"This is unlikely to succeed," a U.S. senior defense official said on the condition of anonymity, "as Russia has historically not met personnel end strength targets."

"In fact, if you look at the Russian Armed Forces prior to the invasion, they may have already been 150,000 personnel short of their million-personnel goal," the official told reporters at the Pentagon on Monday.

Prior to the invasion, one-quarter of all Russian troops were conscripts. Moscow's recruitment efforts since then have included broadening the age limits for new recruits and encouraging prisoners to join the ranks.

The U.S. assesses many of these new recruits are older, unfit and ill-trained, suggesting that any additional personnel Russia is able to muster by the end of the year likely won't increase Moscow's overall combat power.

"All these issues happen when you don't have appropriate oversight mechanisms at that level," Massicot says. "It's a structural problem. They did have policies in place to address these issues, but there's still clearly an oversight lapse."

Russia is far from the only country to have experienced these kinds of problems with a force it has attempted to field and endure the hardships of battle.

The 20-year history of the U.S. intervention in Afghanistan and, notably, its attempts to extract itself is lined with repeated and publicly documented instances of graft and corruption among the local force it attempted to put in place.

"Ghost soldiers" became a household term to describe the nonexistent units local Afghan commanders said they oversaw, drawing money from a central government they distrusted and pocketing it. The Special Inspector General for Afghan Reconstruction, still working by congressional mandate a year after the U.S. ended the war, concluded in 2020 that \$19 billion out of approximately \$63 billion of U.S. taxpayer money – a third – had been lost to "waste, fraud and abuse."

President Joe Biden claimed in July 2021 that the U.S. and its partners had "trained and equipped nearly 300,000 current serving members of the military" in Afghanistan only for it to have effectively vanished less than two months later.

A key difference, though, is the now defunct U.S.-backed government in Kabul never solidified and expanded to the extent that it controlled a sovereign state. In Russia, its military along with civilian bureaucratic counterparts actively exploit the system of government that exists.

It hasn't always been this way. In the decade or so following the fall of the Soviet Union, leaders in the Kremlin attempted to enact sweeping, good-faith efforts to reform the practices of the past and field a much more reliable military, one worthy of the high confidence that Russian public opinion at the time placed in its armed forces.

In her 2013 biography of Putin, Fiona Hill, the former top Russia policy official within the Trump administration's National Security Council, documented efforts by then-Defense Minister Anatoly Serdyukov when he took office in 2007 – shortly before Russia's invasion of Georgia – to "stop corruption in the military sector and get its finances in order." Unlike his predecessor or Putin himself, Serdyukov did not have a KGB background, nor a history as a close associate of the Russian president. His experience instead derived from the Federal Tax Service and as such he was seen as one of Putin's controllers of financial information.

"Serdyukov's job was to force the retirement of hundreds of thousands of officers and to convert the old Soviet-style, mass conscription-based army into a leaner, more mobile fighting force," Hill wrote. "The smaller army could then get new weapons and modern training."

The initiative aligned with Putin's most prized goal then and now: To restore the grandeur and effectiveness of Russia's fighting forces and to equip them with the most modern weaponry available.

Whatever modernization efforts took place during that time – on display for Russia's subsequent foreign interventions – were also deeply unpopular among Russia's old guard and receded in 2012 with Putin's

reversion to appointing close personal allies, who remain in those positions today: military bureaucrat Shoigu as defense minister, seen as “Putin’s man,” Hill writes, and Gen. Valery Gerasimov as chief of the general staff, the “transmission belt to the other men who counted: the uniformed military.”

Combined with the kleptocracy of Putin’s government – in which he gave permission to oligarchs to siphon public funds while maintaining ever-present threats of blackmail to ensure loyalty, a tactic he learned in the KGB – the Russian military yet again, perhaps unbeknownst to Putin, reverted to its longtime corrupt practices.

“Russia’s geopolitical power is an existential matter for Putin – the one thing he truly cares about more than any other,” Robert Person, a professor of international relations at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, says, speaking in a personal capacity. “And yet the individuals in Russia’s military-defense complex are just as greedy as those throughout the rest of the government bureaucracy. Why should they be denied their corruption-funded comforts just because they are engaged in national defense?”

“And so the skimming, stealing, and misallocation of money, equipment, supplies, and other resources flourishes throughout the military as everyone seeks to take their cut. But unlike the civilian sectors, this theft cannot be admitted openly within the ‘power vertical.’ Robbing Russia’s national defense is not tolerated in the way that it would be – or even encouraged – in civilian heavy industry,” Person says. “So they do what generations of Soviet officers and defense bureaucrats did for decades before them: lie up the chain. Lie about the readiness of their troops and equipment, lie about how the budget is being spent – all to cover up the scale of their theft.

“And because Putin has constructed a personalist dictatorship where everyone around him is dependent on him for their wealth, power and even freedom, he will never hear the truth about how corrupt his military is and how badly they are likely to perform as a result.”

Putin and his advisers seriously overestimated military capabilities and manpower as a result, Person adds, leading to “a strategically disastrous miscalculation to launch a war that they were not equipped to win.”

“And so I would say that corruption in the military and the entire political system go a long way in explaining Putin’s miscalculation in invading Ukraine.”

Putin has not offered any indications this cycle of corruption will change, certainly not as the Russian military accepts his orders to expand in an attempt to offset its battlefield failures thus far.

Any expansion there, however, will likely only take place on paper. And it remains unclear whether Putin himself will realize it.

“Based on what I’ve seen studying him and his regime for the last 22 years,” Person concludes, “my guess is that he will believe his own propaganda until the end.”

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HEADLINE	<b>08/31 Labor Day weekend air travel nightmare</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/aug/31/airlines-cancel-flights-offer-travel-waivers-ahead/">https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/aug/31/airlines-cancel-flights-offer-travel-waivers-ahead/</a>
GIST	<p>If you thought the summer flying season was bad, the coming Labor Day weekend promises to be a nightmare as flight cancellations and delays spike again.</p> <p>Flight-tracking website FlightAware reports that severe weather in the Northeast forced 881 cancellations and 4,939 delays of flights within the U.S. on Tuesday, with interruptions continuing into Wednesday. Southwest, American and United have issued travel waivers for stranded passengers.</p> <p>With fares up and more than 12 million people expected to fly out of U.S. airports between Thursday night and Monday’s holiday, U.S. airlines are also battling staff shortages amid a post-pandemic rebound in travel demand. FlightAware says it has canceled more than 44,000 flights since June.</p>

Helene Becker, an airlines analyst at Cowen Financial Services, predicts this weekend's interruptions will be "probably in line with July 4," when thousands of flights were canceled and delayed.

Ms. Becker said that while airlines have struggled with staff and customer service this year, the Federal Aviation Administration extends weather delays "longer than needed" even when a storm moves through.

"Frankly, I think there is enough blame to go around, and everyone in the aviation infrastructure shares in the blame," she said.

Large numbers of airline crew members, airport workers and air traffic controllers have already called in sick this month.

The FAA announced two weeks ago that Delta would "temporarily cut" some Labor Day weekend flights at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport and New York's LaGuardia and John F. Kennedy airports as a result.

According to the price-tracking app Hopper, Chicago's Midway International Airport has already delayed 47% of its August flights, making it the top airport to avoid this weekend. Large numbers of flights have also been delayed at Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport and Dallas' Love Field.

The airlines say they have done everything possible to prepare for this weekend. They blame part of the problem on the government not training any new air traffic controllers during two years of pandemic restrictions.

Airlines for America, a nonprofit group that represents the nation's 10 major passenger and cargo air carriers, said in an email that the airlines hit a record-high 767,000 employees in June, trimmed their summer capacity by 16% and are "already in the process of adjusting their fall schedules."

In a separate email, Southwest said it has added full-time staff, abolished expiration dates for flight credits and "modernized" customer service heading into the long Labor Day weekend.

According to the government, the airlines themselves caused most of the problems by overbooking flights earlier this year.

Last month, Bureau of Transportation Statistics data showed that from January to May, 40.7% of flight delays were caused by the air carriers themselves and 36.7% were caused by planes arriving late. Only 17.2% were caused by "national aviation system problems" such as a shortage of air traffic controllers.

"Where demand has increased, the FAA is adding additional air traffic controllers," the FAA said in an email. "The FAA annually hires new controllers, is on target to meet our hiring goal this year, and is reducing the backlog of training caused by COVID-19."

Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg has called the interruptions "unacceptable," pushing carriers to issue prompt refunds for canceled flights.

The Department of Transportation says Mr. Buttigieg's response has helped the airlines trim their schedules and improve recruitment.

"In part, these actions have led to a decrease in cancellations from late spring and early this summer," the DOT said in an email.

In a report last Friday, the DOT said it received more than 5,800 air travel complaints in June, up roughly 270% from more than 1,500 complaints in June 2019. Between January and June, the DOT received 28,500 complaints, up 27.8% from the first six months of last year and more than in all of 2019.

	<p>According to the DOT, airlines canceled 2.8% of their flights from January to June. American Airlines, the nation's largest carrier, led the way with 3.88% of all flights scrapped — more than any major competitor and ahead of only Spirit, Allegiant and JetBlue.</p> <p>Flyers Rights, a nonprofit passengers' advocacy group, is advising air travelers to do more than get a refund for canceled flights this weekend.</p> <p>The group says travelers who want to arrive at their destinations should consider booking a refundable ticket on a second airline or driving instead of flying.</p> <p>"Labor Day weekend, as one of the top air travel periods, requires passengers to be especially alert to possible flight delays or cancellations," said Paul Hudson, the group's president.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/31 Europe purges Soviet monuments</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/aug/31/war-protest-statues-fall-as-europe-purges-soviet-m/">https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/aug/31/war-protest-statues-fall-as-europe-purges-soviet-m/</a>
GIST	<p>WARSAW, Poland — In the Latvian capital of Riga, an obelisk that soared high above a park to commemorate the Soviet Army's capture of that nation in 1944 was toppled last week. It crashed into a pond to the cheers of those watching.</p> <p>Days earlier in Estonia, a replica of a Soviet tank with the communist red star was removed by cranes and trucked away to a museum - one of up to 400 destined for removal. And in Poland, Lithuania and Czechia, monuments to the Red Army have been coming down for months, a belated purge of what many see as symbols of past oppression.</p> <p>Russia's war on Ukraine has given a renewed push to topple the last remaining Soviet monuments in nations that regained their sovereignty from Moscow more than three decades ago. These countries now belong to NATO and the European Union and are staunch supporters of Ukraine.</p> <p>At the end of the communist era, when Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia regained their independence from the Soviet Union and Poland and its neighbors rejected Moscow-backed communism, those nations began renaming streets and purging the most hated symbols, including statues of Soviet founder Vladimir Lenin and other communist bosses. Many of these relics are now housed in museums.</p> <p>In Warsaw, authorities in 1989 quickly toppled a monument to Felix Dzerzhinsky, a Polish aristocrat who organized the Soviet secret police after the 1917 Bolshevik revolution. Under his rule, the Cheka, the forerunner of the KGB, was responsible for a wave of terror.</p> <p>Such changes followed the reforms of Mikhail Gorbachev, the last Soviet leader, who died in a Moscow hospital on Tuesday at the age of 91.</p> <p>But memorials to Soviet soldiers or their role in defeating Nazi Germany remained in many places, met with indifference or respect for the ordinary soldiers who died fighting Adolf Hitler's brutal regime.</p> <p>The war in Ukraine, however, has triggered memories of how some of those soldiers also raped local women and carried out other war crimes.</p> <p>Krista Sarv, the research director for the Estonian History Museum, said after statues of Lenin and other leading communists were toppled in the 1990s, people could largely ignore the other memorials. But views changed suddenly after the Russian invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24, and now the memorials "scream loudly about occupation and annexation."</p> <p>Karol Nawrocki, the head of Poland's Institute of National Remembrance which is overseeing the removal of the monuments, says "before our eyes, history has become a living experience."</p>



“Dressed in the uniforms of the Russian Federation, with Lenin and Stalin in their heads and hearts, Russian soldiers ‘liberate’ Ukraine by murdering women, children and killing soldiers,” Nawrocki said.

“Let it be clear: There is no place in the Polish public space for any commemoration of the totalitarian communist regime and its people,” he added.

A 2016 decommunization law had already called for a purge of communist symbols and names, but some municipalities did not have the money for that, so the institute has stepped in to help. Since February, the Polish institute has identified 60 monuments for removal - and has toppled more than 20.

In Lithuania, a number of remaining Soviet memorials have been removed since the spring to little protest. But in Latvia and Estonia, which have sizeable Russian minorities, the removals have stirred greater emotions, with local Russians - and the Russian government - seeing it as an offense against their war heroes.

Dmitry Prokopenko, a Russian-speaking Latvian who opposed removing the Riga obelisk, said his grandparents fought and a great-grandfather died in the fight “for freedom against the Nazis.” To him, the memorial honored their sacrifice.

“Latvia is a land where Latvians and Russians live together,” he said. “I think that one part of the state, one part of the country, should respect also the rights of the other part.”

The Russian Foreign Ministry on Tuesday released a lengthy statement denouncing the demolition of Soviet monuments in the Baltic countries as “barbaric” and threatening Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia with retaliatory measures.

In an apparent slap against Poland, Belarus last week reportedly leveled a memorial containing the graves of Polish wartime soldiers.

Polish officials declared that action barbaric, given that Poland has a policy of not disturbing the graves of Soviet soldiers. Rafal Leskiewicz, a historian with the Polish remembrance institute, explained “as Christians, we treat graves as holy ground. It doesn’t matter who is in the graves.”

In some cases locals support keeping Red Army memorials because of its role in defeating Nazi Germany. Some fear the erasure of historical memory, or see an affront to their own ancestors who fought alongside the Soviets.

In Poland’s northern city of Gdansk, there’s been a heated debate about a Soviet T-34 tank on Victory Avenue, and the city has decided not to remove it. The tank commander was a Polish lieutenant, and Polish soldiers played a key role in freeing the former German city of Danzig from the Nazis.

In an open letter, two descendants of wartime Polish soldiers expressed their indignation at the removal of monuments.

They recalled that Polish soldiers died fighting with the Soviets to free Poland from the Nazis and that the Soviet victory resulted in Poland receiving a swath of defeated Germany’s territory and cities including Gdansk and Wroclaw. They also noted it was the Red Army that liberated Auschwitz, Majdanek and many other Nazi death camps.

“Had it not been for the victory of Polish and Soviet soldiers in May 1945, Poland might not have existed at all,” said the letter by magazine editor Pawel Dybicz and historian August Grabski.

But many other Poles note that World War II broke out after Soviet Union and Nazi Germany agreed secretly in 1939 to carve up Poland and the Baltic states. Only after Germany betrayed and invaded the Soviet Union did the Red Army begin to fight the Germans.

	<p>Even before Russia's war in Ukraine, the monuments have been a source of tension.</p> <p>In 2007, the relocation of a World War II monument of a Red Army soldier in Tallinn, Estonia, sparked days of rioting.</p> <p>In 2013, an artist put up a statue depicting a Soviet soldier raping a pregnant woman next to the Gdansk tank. The unauthorized sculpture was quickly removed. After Russia invaded Ukraine, a different artist covered the tank with a large hand-sewn Ukrainian flag to protest what he called the "tyranny" of Russian President Vladimir Putin.</p> <p>In March, as Poland was figuring out a timetable for taking down Soviet monuments, a resident of the northern city of Koszalin took matters into his own hands. He drove an excavator onto a cemetery and toppled the statue of a Soviet soldier being hugged by a girl.</p> <p>Nawrocki says the official removal of Soviet monuments in Poland is progressing at "a very fast pace, but it is a matter that should have been settled long ago."</p>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>08/31 Hawaii closes its only coal power plant</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/aug/31/hawaii-close-coal-power-plant-renewable-energy">https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/aug/31/hawaii-close-coal-power-plant-renewable-energy</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>Hawaii will close its only coal-fired power plant on Thursday, an aggressive step forward in the state's effort to transition entirely to renewable energy by 2045.</p> <p>The AES power plant has been in use since 1992 on Oahu – the state's third largest island and home to its capital Honolulu – and is responsible for as much as 20% of the island's electricity.</p> <p>But it also emits 1.5m metric tons of carbon dioxide each year, making it one of Hawaii's main greenhouse gas emitters, according to Shannon Tangonan, spokesperson for Hawaiian Electric.</p> <p>The closure of the plant came after Hawaii lawmakers approved legislation in 2020 effectively banning coal for electricity production by the end of this year. The AES corporation's 30-year contract with Hawaiian Electric was set to expire this year.</p> <p>Hawaii has long been known for its commitment to renewable energy. In 2015, it became the first US state to pass a law directing all electricity to come from renewable energy sources. Since then, nearly two dozen states and Washington DC have set similar goals, including New York, which is working toward zero emission electricity by 2040 and Rhode Island, which is working toward 100% renewable energy electricity by 2033.</p> <p>"It's a major milestone," said Scott Glenn, Hawaii's chief energy officer. "It's our end of the use of coal in Hawaii after 150 years."</p> <p>In recent years, state officials have launched or initiated the development process on a variety of renewable energy projects, including the use of solar panels and battery storage facilities. The state has at least 14 solar, battery or geothermal projects set to open by 2024. Many of the projects on Oahu were expected to start running close to the time the power plant closed, but supply chain challenges and rising costs have caused delays, Tangonan said.</p> <p>In July, the Mililani I Solar on Oahu came online. The large-scale solar and battery project has provided 39 megawatts of power during peak times, she added in explaining one of the renewable energy investments.</p>

But the transition away from the coal power plant won't be completely free of fossil fuels. Depending on the island, Hawaii still relies in part on oil from outside the US. On Oahu, the coal generation will be replaced at least in part by oil initially, Tangonan said.

The replacement means that electric bills for Hawaii residents, which already have a history of being higher than the mainland US, are expected to increase on Oahu by about 7% or \$15 for an average resident.

"It is really unfortunate that we are having to rely on oil for a short period of time to transition from coal to the solar and battery projects," Glenn said. "[But] it underscores the whole reason we need to make this change. Because oil is incredibly volatile. And we have to pay for it in a way that you don't have to with solar battery."

He said the state is expected to close some of its oil power plants in the coming years, including part of the Waiau power plant on Oahu.

Sandra Larsen, market business leader for AES in Hawaii, said the company supports the shuttering of its coal power plant and is now working on six renewable energy projects across the state's four island counties. One of its projects, Kuihelani, is expected to generate power for about 27,000 homes on Maui.

"The coal plant was needed to help stabilize Oahu's electricity rates and the economy ... 30 years later, it's time to move on," she said.

Glenn did point to serious concerns about what would happen to the workers at the coal plant once it was closed.

AES has helped the majority of the plant's more than 40 full-time employees transition to renewable energy positions, while providing training to help them move into the clean energy job market, Larsen said.

Glenn said he expects the shift away from coal and the state's increasing reliance on renewable energy will lead to lower energy prices and more stable and predictable costs, but also less money sent overseas.

"The idea is that as we switch to renewables, and we have more predictable electric bills, and we're bringing equipment to Hawaii to make electricity for us, rather than things to burn into electricity, then you started to keep more and more money at home," he said. "We're investing in ourselves. We're building up our capital to be more independent."

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HEADLINE	09/01 Day 190 of the Russia invasion
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/sep/01/russia-ukraine-war-latest-what-we-know-on-day-190-of-the-invasion">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/sep/01/russia-ukraine-war-latest-what-we-know-on-day-190-of-the-invasion</a>
GIST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Ukraine's counteroffensive to reclaim Kherson has not stalled or failed</b>, a senior adviser to Ukraine's president, Volodymyr Zelenskiy, has said. "The fact that we have not taken Kherson yet does not mean that the operation in the south has stalled or failed," Oleksiy Arestovych said in a video messaged posted to Telegram early on Thursday morning. "It is carried out in a planned manner. We destroy enemy logistics, air defence systems, fuel and ammunition depots." Arestovych cautioned Ukrainians to be patient, adding "there will be no quick wins".</li><li>• <b>Ukraine's armed forces struck strategic bridges in the southern Kherson region</b> to isolate Russian troops located on the right bank of the Dnieper, Arestovych added. Ukraine's Ministry of Defence said the Kakhovsky and Daryiv bridges, used by <a href="#">Russia</a> to transport equipment and ammunition to the region, have been "disabled" in an update posted to Telegram early on Thursday.</li><li>• <b><a href="#">Uncertainty hangs over the planned inspectors' visit to the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant</a></b>. A team from the UN nuclear watchdog <a href="#">arrived in Ukrainian-controlled Zaporizhzhia city</a> on</li></ul>

	<p>Wednesday. “If we are able to establish a permanent presence, or a continued presence, then it’s going to be prolonged. But this first segment is going to take a few days,” said the organisation’s chief, Rafael Grossi. On Wednesday, the Russian-occupying authorities said the team would be given access for one day.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>The Russian military is suffering “severe manpower shortages”</b> and is seeking to recruit contract service members and may even draw in convicted criminals, a US official said on Wednesday, citing US intelligence. The official said it was believed the Russian defence ministry was seeking to recruit contract service members to make up for personnel shortages, “including by compelling wounded soldiers to re-enter combat, acquiring personnel from private security companies, and paying bonuses to conscripts”.</li> <li>• <b>Volodymyr Zelenskiy addressed the Venice film festival describing Russia’s war on Ukraine as “a primitive plot in three acts</b> for the world to make three dramatic mistakes: to get used to the war, to put up with the war, to forget about the war”. Zelenskiy told the audience “not to remain silent” and “not to remain neutral” to the war.</li> <li>• <b>Russia has <a href="#">stopped the flow of gas via the Nord Stream 1 pipeline to Europe</a>, citing the need to carry out repairs.</b> The German government rejects the claim, calling it a “pretence”. It said Nord Stream was “fully operational” and that there were no technical issues. The halt on the Baltic Sea pipeline at 5am on Wednesday would last for three days, said Gazprom, the Russian state energy company.</li> <li>• <b>Estonia aims to stop most Russians from entering within weeks</b>, its foreign minister, Urmas Reinsalu, said on Wednesday. “It takes some time, but I think timing is also critical, looking at these vast numbers of Russian citizens entering,” Reinsalu said in Prague.</li> <li>• <b>The EU has agreed to <a href="#">suspend a visa travel deal with Moscow</a></b> to curb the number of Russian nationals entering the bloc for holidays and shopping, stopping short of a full tourist visa ban. Meeting in Prague, the EU’s 27 foreign ministers promised to suspend the 2007 visa facilitation agreement with Russia that makes it relatively easy to obtain travel documents.</li> <li>• <b>Zelenskiy welcomed the EU visa measure.</b> “I think it is humiliating for Europe when it is considered as just one big boutique or restaurant,” he said in his latest national address. “When the citizens of the state that wants to destroy European values use Europe for their entertainment or shopping, for the vacation of their mistresses while they themselves work for the war or to simply silently wait out the immoral fall of Russia.”</li> <li>• <b>The US obtained a warrant to seize a \$45m airplane owned by Russian energy firm Lukoil</b>, the US justice department said, though the aircraft is currently believed to be in Russia. The aircraft reportedly flew into and out of Russia in violation of US department of commerce sanctions.</li> <li>• <b>G7 finance ministers will discuss the Biden administration’s proposed price cap on Russian oil</b> when they meet on Friday, the White House said. “This is the most effective way, we believe, to hit hard at Putin’s revenue and doing so will result in not only a drop in Putin’s oil revenue, but also global energy prices as well,” said White House spokesperson Karine Jean-Pierre at a briefing on Wednesday.</li> </ul>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/31 Brutal heatwave scorches West, impact 50M</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/aug/31/us-heatwave-west-california-pacific-north-west-nevada-idaho-montana">https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/aug/31/us-heatwave-west-california-pacific-north-west-nevada-idaho-montana</a>
GIST	<p>A record-breaking heatwave has scorched the US west, the latest in a string of extreme temperature events putting communities on high alert for heat-related illness and death as temperatures are expected to spike higher through the holiday weekend.</p> <p>More than 50 million Americans live in areas now under excessive heat watches, warnings and advisories. Temperatures are expected to hit 115F (46C) in the coming days across parts of southern California, Sacramento and the San Joaquin Valley, according to the National Weather Service. In Death Valley, temperatures were forecast to reach more than 120F (49C) – and perhaps match the highest temperature observed globally in the month of September.</p>

On Wednesday afternoon, heat records for this time of year broke in several California communities, including those near Los Angeles and San Diego. In Burbank and Woodland Hills, a suburb north of Los Angeles, temperatures rose to an alarming 112F (44C) smashing previous August records.

The extreme heat also helped spur new wildfires across the state. The Route fire, which erupted in the triple-digit heat and prompted closures of Interstate 5 as residents in the area were forced to flee. The fire spread quickly, consuming thousands of acres in mere hours. Seven firefighters battling the blaze [suffered heat-related injuries](#) according to the Los Angeles county fire department, which added five of them were taken to hospitals for care.

The California department of emergency services said additional fire resources had been prepositioned in high-risk areas across the state as officials prepare for conditions to intensify through the weekend.

“The National Weather Service is forecasting widespread extreme fire weather over parts of the central coast and southern California through the weekend and into next week,” officials said in an update on Wednesday, noting that both essential equipment and additional personnel were made ready in Orange and Santa Barbara counties “The public is urged to remain aware of their surrounding conditions and to avoid outdoor activities that can cause a spark near dry vegetation,” they added, urging residents to have emergency plans in place and load their vehicles with fuel to prepare for a fast evacuation.

Temperatures are expected to build throughout the week, with northern and southern California bracing for the highest temperatures during the long weekend. Extreme heat warnings have been triggered up and down the state, including in the San Francisco Bay area.

Parts of the Pacific north-west, Nevada, Idaho and Montana will also face dangerous temperatures. Boise, Idaho, is expected to finish August with an average temperature of 80F (27C) – the highest since record keeping began in 1875. Temperatures are expected to be eight to 12 degrees above normal in north-west Arizona, south-east California and southern Nevada.

Across many of these areas, temperatures are expected to cool only slightly overnight – elevating the risk for heatstroke and deaths, especially for vulnerable populations who lack air conditioning.

The extreme temperatures are a result of a “heat dome” bearing over the region – a ridge of high atmospheric pressure that acts as a lid, trapping in heat. Although climate crisis doesn’t cause heat domes, scientists expect it to drive more extreme weather.

The heatwave is just the latest of several to hit the US this summer. As they grow more frequent and intense, California has debated naming and ranking them – similarly to hurricanes – to underscore their significance. Extreme heat kills more people in the US than any other weather event, according to the National Weather Service. In interior northern California, the service has warned that “the entire population is at risk” of deadly heat.

California officials have warned that the heat could strain the state’s energy resources as demand for air conditioners and other appliances surge. The strain could be especially acute in a year that has already seen hydropower disrupted due to drought. With the heatwave just beginning, officials have called for residents to conserve energy where possible to avoid outages, describing the coming days as “the most extensive heatwave in the west so far this year” in a news release.

Additional “FlexAlerts”, a warning to conserve energy “are also possible through the Labor Day weekend as record setting temperatures are forecast across much of the west”, the state’s grid operator said.

High temperatures are also expected to accelerate the formation of ground-level ozone, or smog, which exacerbates respiratory issues. In southern California, officials have issued an ozone advisory due to the heatwave, advising people to stay indoors and avoid physical exertion.

	<p>Officials also warn that the high temperatures could further prime the parched, drought-addled west for wildfires. Parts of the west have already seen an explosive spring and summer, with major fires in the south-west and Alaska.</p> <p>On Sunday, Oregon governor, Kate Brown, declared a state of emergency due to the “imminent” threat of wildfire. “It is imperative that we act now to prevent further loss – of life, property, business, and our natural resources,” she said.</p> <p>In California, which has seen a relatively quiet fire season compared with recent years, officials advise that the heat will not only further dry and prime the landscape for explosive fire, but also increase the risk of ignitions. “With the warming and drying trend this week and over the weekend, we will see very dangerous heat risk and increased fire weather concerns over portions of interior northern California,” advised the National Weather Service in Sacramento.</p> <p>The National Interagency Fire Center has warned of high fire risk in much of northern California, due to “warm temps, gusty winds”, low humidity, and “flammable fuels”.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/31 Worry: Pakistan flooding disease outbreaks</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2022/aug/31/health-officials-warn-of-major-outbreaks-of-disease-after-severe-floods-in-pakistan">https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2022/aug/31/health-officials-warn-of-major-outbreaks-of-disease-after-severe-floods-in-pakistan</a>
GIST	<p>Health officials have warned of large-scale outbreaks of disease in <a href="#">Pakistan</a> after severe flooding displaced millions of people.</p> <p>A rise in cases of diarrhoea and malaria has been reported after months of heavy rains left people stranded and without access to clean water.</p> <p>Authorities say they are concerned that the <a href="#">spread of waterborne diseases</a> after the floods, which have killed almost 1,200 people, will further strain health facilities. More than 880 clinics have been damaged, according to the World Health Organization, which has allocated \$10m (£8.6m) to emergency health relief efforts.</p> <p>Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, director general of the WHO, said on Wednesday that the agency had classified the floods as the highest level of emergency. He said the threat of waterborne diseases meant access to health services and disease monitoring and controls were a “key priority”.</p> <p>Arif Jabbar Khan, director of WaterAid Pakistan, has visited Sindh province, province worst affected by the rains, which began in June. He said there was a severe risk of diarrhoea and dysentery because of the lack of clean water.</p> <p>“Families are now living on the banks of overflowed canals and rivers in ramshackle huts made of bamboo and plastic. They have even been drinking flood water because there is no other option – a recipe for large-scale disease outbreaks. We are doing all we can to reach them,” said Khan.</p> <p>At least <a href="#">33 million people have been affected</a> by the floods, which have contaminated water sources and left latrines unusable.</p> <p>Sindh’s health minister, Dr Azra Fazal Pechuho, said the government had set up 4,210 medical camps for people suffering from skin conditions and waterborne diseases.</p> <p>In the north-western Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, one doctor, Farhad Khan, told the Associated Press that patients were initially coming with injuries from the flooding, but diarrhoea was now common.</p>



A spokesperson for the provincial government, Kamran Bangash, said hundreds of people had contracted waterborne diseases. With evacuation operations almost completed, the authorities would focus on providing clean water and food, he added.

“In recent weeks flood water badly affected hundreds of thousands of people. We don’t want them to again suffer, this time due to non-availability of clean water. It can be avoided,” Bangash said.

The UN and Pakistan have asked for \$160m to provide emergency support to 5 million people, including food, water, sanitation and shelter.

The WHO said it was working with the Pakistani government to respond to outbreaks of diarrhoea, cholera and other diseases. It said the floods had compounded existing problems with malaria and dengue fever.

It also warned of the impact of the floods on tackling other diseases, such as measles and polio. Pakistan and Afghanistan are the only countries where polio is still endemic.

Mustafa Khan, a British-Pakistani who was on holiday in Karachi when the rains came, said people living in Khokhrapar, an informal settlement on the outskirts of the port city, had no access to toilets. Khan, who is volunteering with a charity to help the relief effort, added that hygiene conditions were clearly deteriorating, with many children suffering from eye infections.

“Everyone’s clothes were pretty dirty because there’s no water, so they’re not going to prioritise cleaning themselves over drinking. Whatever fresh water they have, they’re going to use for cooking,” he said.

“It was pretty grim, but because this [settlement] was closer to Karachi, there are road links and people are getting supplies to them. It’s not as dire a condition as those villages completely surrounded by water where it’s obviously really, really bad.”

Sadiqa Salahuddin, who heads a girls’ education group, Indus Resource Centre, said many of the schools she helped run in Sindh province were now hosting displaced people, but were running out of space.

She said her team was trying to construct temporary toilets, but building materials were hard to find.

Ashfaq Soomro, who heads the Research and Development Foundation, a Sindhi charity, said the many makeshift roadside camps that had emerged had either nonexistent or inadequate sanitation.

“The NGO response is not well organised. So this aspect remains untouched. In government-designated camps, like in schools and technical institutions, lavatories are available, but we don’t know how functional these are. The influx of IDPs [internally displaced people] is enormous, so even if these were functional on normal days, this may not be the case now.”

Aid agencies also warned that pregnant and menstruating women and girls were facing increased challenges. The UN’s reproductive health agency, UNFPA, estimates there are 650,000 pregnant women in flood-affected areas, and up to 73,000 are expected to give birth in the next month.

Salahuddin said she was struggling to provide sanitary towels to women because the village where she usually bought them had been inundated.

“Women sitting on the roadside are the worst off. They wait till late sundown before relieving themselves. And those who have their period usually wear dark-coloured shalwars [loose pleated trousers] so that it does not show that they are bleeding,” she said.

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HEADLINE	09/01 Taiwan shoots down drone for first time
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/sep/01/taiwan-shoots-down-drone-chinese-coast-first-time">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/sep/01/taiwan-shoots-down-drone-chinese-coast-first-time</a>



GIST	<p>Taiwan's military has shot down for the first time an unidentified civilian drone that entered its airspace near an islet off the Chinese coast, after the government vowed to take tough measures to deal with an increase in such intrusions.</p> <p>Beijing, which claims Taiwan as its own against the objections of the Taipei government, has held military exercises around the island since early last month in reaction to a visit to Taipei by the US House of Representatives speaker, Nancy Pelosi.</p> <p>Taiwan's government has said it will not provoke or escalate tensions but has been particularly angered recently by repeated cases of Chinese drones buzzing islands controlled by Taiwan close to China's coast.</p> <p>The defence command for Kinmen, a group of Taiwan-controlled islands opposite the Chinese cities Xiamen and Quanzhou, said in a statement released by Taiwan's defence ministry that the drone entered restricted airspace over Lion Islet just after midday local time (0500 BST).</p> <p>Troops on the islet tried warning it away but to no effect, so shot it down, with the remains landing in the sea, it added.</p> <p>Taiwan fired warning shots at a drone for the first time on Tuesday shortly after President Tsai Ing-wen ordered the military to take "strong countermeasures" against what she termed Chinese provocations.</p> <p>Speaking to the armed forces earlier on Thursday, Tsai said China was continuing to use drone intrusions and other "grey zone" tactics to try to intimidate Taiwan, her office cited her as saying in a statement.</p> <p>Tsai again emphasised that Taiwan would not provoke disputes but that did not mean it would not take countermeasures, the statement added.</p> <p>"She has also ordered the ministry of national defence to take necessary and strong countermeasures in a timely manner to defend national security," it said.</p> <p>"Let the military guard the country without fear and with solid confidence."</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/31 Pandemic shortened Indigenous lives</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/31/health/life-expectancy-covid-native-americans-alaskans.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/31/health/life-expectancy-covid-native-americans-alaskans.html</a>
GIST	<p>Carol Schumacher, 56, who was raised in the remote community of Chilchinbeto in the Navajo Nation, has lost 42 family members to Covid-19 over the last two years. The dead included two brothers aged 55 and 54, and cousins as young as 18 and 19.</p> <p>Ms. Schumacher returned to the Navajo Nation from her home in Wisconsin this summer to grieve with family. She knew what to expect, having grown up on the reservation in Arizona. But what she saw left her reeling.</p> <p>The nearest hospital was a long drive away on dirt roads, she said, "and there's no guarantee about the quality of care there even if you make it in time. Some families don't even have transportation or running water. Imagine dealing with that."</p> <p>Now federal health researchers have put a number to the misery that Ms. Schumacher and so many other families in Native communities experienced in the first two years of the pandemic.</p> <p>In 2020 and 2021, as the coronavirus swept across the United States, life expectancy for Native Americans and Alaska Natives fell by six and a half years — a decline that left the researchers aghast.</p> <p>The comparable figure for all Americans was about three years, itself a terrible milestone not seen in nearly a century.</p>

What could have left Native Americans and Alaska Natives so vulnerable to the pandemic? There is no simple diagnosis, nor is there an easy fix, experts say.

The suffering is inextricably bound to a long history of poverty, inadequate access to health care, poor infrastructure and crowded housing, much of it the legacy of broken government promises and centuries of bigotry.

At least one in four Native Americans [lives in poverty](#), the highest rate of any racial or ethnic group in the United States, according to the Department of Health and Human Services. Discrimination and racism [have been linked to the erosion of mental and physical health](#), as has exposure to [polluted air](#) and [water](#), studies have found.

If researchers were surprised by the findings, many who live and work in Indigenous communities were not.

“There is nothing weird or unusual about our population,” said Dr. Ann Bullock, a former director of diabetes treatment and prevention at the federal Indian Health Services agency and a member of the Minnesota Chippewa Tribe.

“This is simply what happens biologically to populations that are chronically and profoundly stressed and deprived of resources.”

Among ethnic and racial groups tracked by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Native Americans and Alaska Natives [were the most disproportionately affected by Covid](#). The case rate has been 50 percent higher among the groups than among white Americans.

Native Americans and Alaska Natives have been nearly three times as likely to be hospitalized with Covid and more than twice as likely to die of it.

Nonetheless, federal researchers were slow to comprehend the outlines of the disaster. After a yearlong delay, officials announced in early August that Native Americans and Alaska Natives [have seen a four-year drop in life expectancy in 2020 alone](#).

The additional two-and-a-half year reduction in 2021 that was reported on Tuesday brought the total to more than six years, meaning that life expectancy had shortened to 65 years during the first two years of the pandemic.

“We had the death rates and knew they were high, but it hadn’t been translated into life expectancy,” said Dr. Noreen Goldman, a professor of demography and public affairs at the Princeton School of Public and International Affairs.

Given that life expectancy in parts of the developing world is roughly the same, “it’s easy to understand how drastic it is,” she added.

But while excess deaths — those greater than would be expected in a normal year — during the first year of the pandemic were primarily a result of viral infections in these communities, drug overdoses and chronic liver disease played a comparable role to Covid’s in driving up deaths in 2021.

Still, these causes are not unrelated. The pandemic exacerbated health risks that were already deeply embedded in Native American and Alaska Native populations, according to the new government report.

The groups struggle with high rates of obesity as well as extraordinarily high rates of diabetes, for example: Some 14.5 percent of adults have the disease, a higher percentage than that of any other ethnic group. Both conditions raise the odds of severe illness and death from Covid.

An abundance of such risk factors made it possible for the virus to spread widely, exacting a terrible toll.

Ms. Schumacher, who works as a tutor coordinator at a high school in Madison, Wis., said that grappling with the deaths had affected her own health. “I was already dealing with diabetes, but in addition to that, I just wasn’t mentally prepared to deal with so much loss,” she said.

Many Navajo people die relatively young from other causes, Ms. Schumacher noted, including her mother, who died at 65 of pulmonary disease, and her father, who died at 65 in a car crash caused by a drunken driver.

“Covid was just the tip of the iceberg,” Ms. Schumacher said. “People die too young because they are abandoned. Their access to better health care is nonexistent.”

Patricia Sekaquaptewa, a member of the Hopi Tribe in Arizona and a former justice on the Hopi Appellate Court, lost her aunt, Marlene Sekaquaptewa, the matriarch of a large family and a political leader, who died at 79 after contracting Covid.

But Ms. Sekaquaptewa emphasized that other long-festering problems, such as arsenic-laced well water and exposure to uranium spills, also contributed to poor health among the Hopi.

“And that’s without even talking about alcohol abuse, which has been around since the day I was born,” Ms. Sekaquaptewa said. She said she had lost at least three close family members, all of them men, from alcohol-related diseases over the last two years.

Dr. Jennie R. Joe, a professor emerita of family and community medicine at the University of Arizona’s Wassaja Carlos Montezuma Center for Native American Health, cited entrenched poverty along with chronic disease contributing to the shortening of average life spans among Native Americans and Alaska Natives.

But Dr. Joe cautioned that the decline might be even deeper than the latest figures indicated because death certificates in some regions sometimes misclassify race.

“It is not uncommon for a Native person to be identified as Native on their birth certificate but listed differently on their death certificates, usually listed as white,” said Dr. Joe.

“It is therefore safe to say that the current life expectancy reported for Native Americans is probably a case of undercounting,” she said.

Despite aggressive vaccination drives, in which some tribal nations at first outpaced the rest of the country, the pandemic laid bare other factors that made Native Americans especially vulnerable to the virus.

In the Navajo Nation, which stretches 27,000 square miles across Arizona, New Mexico and Utah, the scarcity of running water in some communities made it harder for people to wash their hands to prevent the spread of the virus. Respiratory problems caused by indoor pollution — the result of wood and coal used to heat many Navajo homes — also increased Covid’s risks.

And while close-knit families have long helped the Navajo deal with hardships, circumstances in which several generations lived under the same roof made it easier for the virus to spread and harder to isolate patients who tested positive.

Another challenge has been the woefully underfunded Indian Health Service, a government program that provides health care to the 2.2 million members of the nation’s tribal communities.

Even before the pandemic, the agency had to contend with aging facilities, shortages of funding and supplies and an insufficient number of health care providers and hospital beds. These weaknesses

	<p>contributed to disproportionately high infection and death rates among Native Americans, fueling new anger over what critics describe as decades of neglect from Congress and successive administrations in Washington.</p> <p>A New York Times analysis found that in states with Indian Health Service hospitals, the death rates for preventable diseases — such as alcohol-related illnesses, diabetes and liver disease — are three to five times higher for Native Americans, who largely rely on those hospitals, than for other groups combined.</p> <p>Stacy A. Bohlen, chief executive officer of the National Indian Health Board, said the most pressing vulnerability of Native Americans is invisibility. “This is a result of a violent system that was eloquently designed to eradicate us,” she said.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/31 Reported sex assaults in military rose 13%</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/31/us/politics/sexual-assault-military.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/31/us/politics/sexual-assault-military.html</a>
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON — Reports of sexual assaults in the military rose sharply in 2021, once again defying efforts by the Pentagon to address a problem that has long bedeviled the men and women who serve in the country’s armed forces, two U.S. officials said Wednesday.</p> <p>The increase, about 13 percent over the previous year, may be driven in part by the easing of coronavirus pandemic restrictions that were put in place in 2020, the officials said. The Pentagon has made the report available to Congress and will release it formally on Thursday, they said.</p> <p>According to the latest findings, <a href="#">reported earlier by The Associated Press</a>, nearly 36,000 service members said in a survey that they had experienced unwanted sexual contact, almost double the number in 2018, the officials said, speaking on the condition of anonymity to describe the report before its public release.</p> <p>The Defense Department has struggled with sexual assaults and a reporting structure that required reports to be filed through the military’s chain of command. Last year, senior Pentagon leaders, after fighting efforts to change the reporting structure, indicated that they would be willing to try a new approach.</p> <p>In December, Congress voted to strip military commanders of most of their authority to prosecute sexual assaults and myriad other criminal cases. Under the new law, independent military prosecutors replace commanders in determining whether those accused of sexual assault, rape, murder, domestic violence and an array of other offenses will be prosecuted.</p> <p>The numbers in the latest report do not reflect the change in reporting structure.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>09/01 China locks down Chengdu, a city of 21M</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/01/world/asia/china-covid-lockdown-chengdu.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/01/world/asia/china-covid-lockdown-chengdu.html</a>
GIST	<p>The authorities in Chengdu, one of China’s biggest cities, are preparing to lock down its residents, turning once again to the country’s tried-and-tested Covid strategy of restricting people’s movements to stop outbreaks.</p> <p>Starting at 6 p.m. on Thursday, residents in the city of more than 21 million will not be allowed to leave their homes without special permission, in the most drastic move to stop an outbreak since Shanghai went into a damaging two-month lockdown in April. Officials gave no indication of how long the lockdown might last but said there would be mass testing starting on Thursday and running through the weekend. Chengdu reported 157 cases on Wednesday and 780 cases since Aug. 25.</p> <p>China is the last major country in the world to pursue a policy of eradicating the virus, and it uses citywide lockdowns and mass testing to root out pockets of outbreaks. But the approach is adding to the pressures facing the local authorities in Sichuan, the southern province whose capital is Chengdu. A record-setting drought and a punishing heat wave have devastated the region’s power supply, and for</p>

more than a week emergency responders were battling quick-moving wildfires around the city of Chongqing.

The challenges come as the ruling Communist Party is also dealing with an economic slowdown, caused largely by its so-called zero-Covid policy, at a politically sensitive time. The country's top leader, Xi Jinping, is readying himself to take a third term in power next month.

China's southwestern region had fared relatively well over nearly three years of the pandemic. But in recent weeks several places, including the megacity of Chongqing, have fought to beat back new outbreaks. Millions of residents there waited for hours in the hot sun and extreme heat while officials carried out mass testing last week.

Chengdu and several other cities across China postponed the start of school on Wednesday. Earlier this week, officials in the city began requiring residents to provide 24-hour Covid nucleic acid tests in order to enter residential compounds and commercial offices, and they shut down public venues and entertainment businesses.

On Thursday, people turned to Chinese social media to vent about the news of the lockdown after officials in Chengdu denied rumors earlier in the week that a lockdown was imminent. Videos posted to Weibo, a popular social media platform, showed crowds of residents in outdoor markets and supermarkets, rushing to stock up on food.

The southern Chinese city of Shenzhen, which borders Hong Kong, shut down the world's biggest electronics market on Monday and suspended service on much of the city's subway system.

In Hong Kong this week, an outbreak has hovered near 10,000 cases a day, the most since one in the spring that led to some of the city's toughest restrictions of the pandemic and that prompted an exodus of expatriates. Officials there are now trying a more lenient approach, diverging from China's broader pandemic strategy for the first time. Officials in Hong Kong have eased the required hotel quarantine for those returning from overseas twice this summer.

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HEADLINE	<b>09/01 Sri Lanka reaches initial deal IMF bailout</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/01/world/asia/sri-lanka-imf-bailout.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/01/world/asia/sri-lanka-imf-bailout.html</a>
GIST	<p>COLOMBO, Sri Lanka — Sri Lanka and the International Monetary Fund on Thursday reached a preliminary agreement on a bailout package as the bankrupt island nation tries to find a way out of a <a href="#">crippling economic crisis</a> that toppled its president.</p> <p>The deal, which still requires final approval from the I.M.F.'s executive board, would extend an emergency loan worth \$2.9 billion, in return for an overhaul of the country's economy to reduce its fiscal deficits. The assistance would also be conditioned on engagement by Sri Lanka with creditors like Japan, China and India to restructure its huge foreign debt, on which the country defaulted this year.</p> <p>"Financing assurances to restore debt sustainability from Sri Lanka's official creditors and making a good-faith effort to reach a collaborative agreement with private creditors are crucial before the I.M.F. can provide financial support to Sri Lanka," the organization said in a statement announcing the staff-level agreement on the loan under a 48-month arrangement.</p> <p>Sri Lanka's debt crisis reached a climax in the spring, as the South Asian nation of 22 million ran out of foreign reserves for essential imports such as fuel and medicine. After months of sustained <a href="#">protests over the deteriorating conditions</a>, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, whose family had dominated Sri Lankan politics for much of the past two decades, was forced out in July.</p> <p>The new president, <a href="#">Ranil Wickremesinghe</a>, has warned of difficult times ahead as he has tried to lay the groundwork for measures that could put the economy back on track.</p>

To reduce government expenses, he has increased the price of electricity and fuel, which were heavily subsidized. As costs for energy imports have ballooned, reaching \$500 million in some months, the country has rationed fuel and continued an extensive ban on imports of foreign goods.

In August, inflation for food items reached nearly 94 percent on a year-on-year basis, and transportation costs had increased by nearly 150 percent, according to data released by Sri Lanka's Central Bank on Wednesday.

Sri Lanka's external debt stands at about \$50 billion, a majority of it from multilateral lenders and sovereign bonds. The debt soared in recent years because of large tax cuts and reckless spending on expansive infrastructure projects. The final blow came with the pandemic lockdowns, which deprived the country of billions in overseas remittances as well as tourism revenue.

Japan, one of the main bilateral lenders, has announced its willingness to convene a conference of the creditors to help restructure the debt, but it is not clear when such a meeting would place or whether China would attend.

The two countries, along with India, make up the main bilateral lenders. As Sri Lanka descended into crisis this year and struggled to get new funding, India extended billions of dollars in loans, credit lines and currency swaps.

For months, Sri Lanka's economic crisis festered as officials in Mr. Rajapaksa's government remained in denial of the gravity of the situation. Negotiations with the I.M.F. finally began in April in Washington, followed by virtual negotiations and visits by I.M.F. teams.

The discussions focused on reducing Sri Lanka's fiscal deficits and "designing a comprehensive economic program to correct the macroeconomic imbalances, restore public debt sustainability," the I.M.F. said.

W. A. Wijewardena, an economist who formerly served as the deputy governor of Sri Lanka's Central Bank, said some of the required reforms — such as reducing the retirement age or improving tax collection — would be easier for the government to achieve than others.

Privatizing state-owned enterprises that are a burden on the treasury, or shifting the economy to an export-oriented one that would bring Sri Lanka sufficient foreign reserves, are long-term projects that will require overcoming political pushback from powerful unions.

"So unless the government is able to stick to this reform program with a specifically set-out timeline with milestones at each point, I don't think we will be able to get the country back on the old growth path," Mr. Wijewardena said.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/31 EU restricts, not ban visas to Russians</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/31/world/europe/eu-russia-visas.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/31/world/europe/eu-russia-visas.html</a>
GIST	<p>BRUSSELS — After a heated debate, European foreign ministers agreed on Wednesday to suspend a 2007 agreement with Russia that makes it easier for Russians to get visas to travel to the European Union.</p> <p>The full suspension of the agreement was a predicted compromise. Numerous member states, including Poland, Finland, the Baltic nations and the Czech Republic, wanted to ban all Russian tourists to show Europe's objection to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.</p> <p>Other countries, including France and Germany, opposed such a blanket ban as a form of collective punishment that would only feed the Russian government's narrative about what it characterizes as a defensive war against Western encroachment.</p>



The suspension of the agreement will make it harder for Russians to get European Union visas — they will cost more, require more paperwork and involve longer delays. The bloc’s foreign-policy chief, Josep Borrell Fontelles, said after a two-day meeting in Prague that the suspension will “significantly reduce” the number of visas issued to Russians.

But he also emphasized that individual countries can decide for themselves how to control their borders. That includes those bordering Russia, which have seen a sharp increase in Russian travelers as air links have been blocked by sanctions. Under the rules of the Schengen area, which allows free travel within 26 countries, individual states can alter border rules for reasons of national security and restrict entry to visa holders.

Poland, Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania said in a joint statement that until there was a satisfactory bloc-wide agreement, they would put into place “temporary measures on the national level in order to address imminent public security issues related to the increased influx of Russian citizens across our borders,” language that comports with the Schengen rules.

Already, a number of those countries, including the Czech Republic, have stopped issuing visas to Russians or have sharply reduced their availability. But there are more than 12 million valid visas in the European Union held by Russians, said Jan Lipavsky, the Czech foreign minister, so the potential issue is enormous.

The ministers asked the European Commission, the bloc’s executive, to come up with a coordinated plan to reduce those numbers, Mr. Borrell said.

More than one million Russian citizens have entered the bloc through land border crossing points since the beginning of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, most of them via Finland and Estonia, the bloc’s border agency, Frontex, has said.

Visas will still be granted on an individual basis or for specific groups, Mr. Borrell said.

“We don’t want to cut ourselves off from those Russians who are against the war in Ukraine,” he said. “We don’t want to cut ourselves from the Russian civil society.”

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HEADLINE	09/01 Russia drastic measures to expand military
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/09/01/world/ukraine-russia-war-news">https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/09/01/world/ukraine-russia-war-news</a>
GIST	<p>The Russian military is trying to make up for its severe manpower shortage in the war in Ukraine by compelling wounded soldiers to return to the front lines, bringing private security contractors into the military and paying bonuses to conscripts, according to a newly declassified U.S. intelligence assessment.</p> <p>Two U.S. officials described the assessment on Wednesday, adding that the United States also has credible reporting that Russia is likely to begin recruiting some convicted criminals to serve in Ukraine, in exchange for pardons.</p> <p>High casualties in Ukraine, coupled with a failure by the Russian military to predict how long and bloody the war would be, have caused a manpower crisis in Ukraine.</p> <p>Last week Russia announced <a href="#">it would expand the size of its army by 137,000</a>, which Western officials said was a reflection of the military’s struggles in Ukraine. Since the beginning of the Ukraine war, <a href="#">between 70,000 and 80,000 Russian troops have been killed or wounded</a>.</p> <p>American officials have repeatedly said they believe that Russia can overcome its military shortages and achieve its strategic goals in Ukraine only by resorting to a draft. The interim steps, like expanding bonuses and raising the maximum age of new recruits, will fall short of making up for the thousands of losses Russia’s military has suffered in the six-month war.</p>



	<p>While debate over the <a href="#">need for a mass mobilization</a> has grown more urgent in Russia in recent weeks, President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia has made clear that he will not resort to a draft, a sign that support for the war is thin among the Russian populace, according to analysts.</p> <p>“I think Putin knows the war is very unpopular,” said Mick Mulroy, a former senior Pentagon official and retired C.I.A. officer.</p> <p>Keen to avoid a draft, Mr. Putin has been looking for other ways to make up for the heavy casualties in Ukraine. “He is essentially losing there,” Mr. Mulroy said. “Or at least not winning, which is losing.”</p>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>08/31 Texas busses illegal immigrants to Chicago</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/aug/31/texas-ships-first-batch-illegal-immigrants-chicago/">https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/aug/31/texas-ships-first-batch-illegal-immigrants-chicago/</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>Chicago is the latest target for Texas Gov. Greg Abbott’s campaign to bus illegal immigrants to Democrat-led cities, after the Republican governor announced the first busload arrived Wednesday.</p> <p>The migrants were dropped off at Union Station in the city’s downtown, Mr. Abbott said. Chicago joins Washington and New York as drop-points for Texas.</p> <p>The governor said all three are “sanctuary cities” that promote themselves as safe havens for illegal immigrants, so he figured they should share the load of the crush of illegal immigrants streaming across the border into his state.</p> <p>“Mayor [Lori] Lightfoot loves to tout the responsibility of her city to welcome all regardless of legal status, and I look forward to seeing this responsibility in action as these migrants receive resources from a sanctuary city with the capacity to serve them,” Mr. Abbott said.</p> <p>Since the governor began the bussing program in April, Texas has shipped more than 7,000 illegal immigrants to other locations at state expense.</p> <p>The move drew howls of outrage — and demands of federal help — from New York Mayor Eric Adams and Washington Mayor Muriel Bowser.</p> <p>Texas says it is taking illegal immigrants whom the Biden administration caught and released onto its streets and putting them on buses to head elsewhere. All migrants who get on the buses have done so voluntarily, Texas says.</p> <p>The Biden administration has lashed out at the governor, though it’s sent conflicting messages.</p> <p>The White House initially mocked the busing campaign, saying the migrants were likely to be headed to those destinations anyway, and now are going at Texas taxpayers’ expense. But the administration later changed tactics and complained that Texas was complicating Homeland Security’s ability to keep track of released migrants.</p>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>08/31 China shuts down US counterdrug talks</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/aug/31/china-shuts-down-counter-drug-talks-us-fueling-fea/">https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/aug/31/china-shuts-down-counter-drug-talks-us-fueling-fea/</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>China’s decision to suspend counternarcotics cooperation with the United States to protest a high-profile congressional visit to Taiwan is fueling fears of a sharp increase in overdose deaths from Chinese-supplied stocks of fentanyl.</p> <p>The Chinese suspension of the bilateral talks was announced on Aug. 5, and current and former U.S. officials are warning of the fallout from increased drug trafficking into the country by Mexican cartels</p>

working with Chinese criminal gangs to move fentanyl, the chemicals used to make it, and other illicit drugs.

Fentanyl seizures were already skyrocketing before the talks ended, according to statistics from U.S. Customs and Border Protection. In July, a total of 2,130 pounds of fentanyl was seized. That was nearly as much fentanyl seized for all of 2019.

White House drug czar Rahul Gupta warned of more drug shipments and called on China last week to resume the talks. Unless Beijing does more, “fentanyl and methamphetamine synthesized with precursors made in China will continue to flood the world,” Dr. Gupta told The Wall Street Journal.

Dr. Gupta called China’s suspension of the talks “unfortunate” and noted that the Chinese government in May 2019 cracked down on fentanyl-related exports. The amount of the drug reaching U.S. shores sharply declined.

“But since those actions, North America has been flooded with precursor chemicals from China, stifling international efforts,” he said.

Dr. Gupta made no mention of whether the lack of controls on the border and influx of illegal immigrants are partly to blame.

China’s halt in the narcotics talks was among eight canceled or suspended bilateral exchanges with the United States in response to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi’s visit to Taiwan. Beijing said the Democratic delegation’s visit violated the long-standing “one China” policy regarding the island’s status.

“At a time when the overdose epidemic continues to claim a life every five minutes, it’s unacceptable that the PRC is withholding its cooperation that would help to bring to justice individuals who traffic these illicit drugs and who engage in this global criminal enterprise,” Dr. Gupta said earlier on Twitter.

David L. Asher, a former State Department official, said the Chinese action will lead to even more fentanyl precursor shipments to Mexico’s Sinaloa and Jalisco cartels. These criminal groups are working with chemical manufacturers producing fentanyl in China.

“Based on their actions, communist China is in a covert opioid war with the U.S., and PRC operatives have taken over money laundering across the U.S. and Canada,” said Mr. Asher, now with the Hudson Institute’s China Center. “That, alone, should be the basis for a [racketeering] prosecution, but the Justice Department and Office of National Drug Control Policy instead are relying on cooperation from China that is a total ‘dead letter item,’” he said.

In 2018, the Chinese government cracked down on direct shipments of fentanyl into the United States through the mail and inside backpacks of so-called drug mules. The slowdown followed a meeting between Chinese President Xi Jinping and President Trump and an agreement by China to curb fentanyl and related exports.

Within 90 days of the December 2018 agreement, which was reached during the Group of 20 summit in Argentina, direct Chinese fentanyl shipments to the United States nearly ended, former U.S. counternarcotics officials said.

### **Border troubles**

The flow of Chinese-produced fentanyl, a synthetic opioid blamed for the overdose deaths of 100,000 people in the U.S. last year, instead shifted to Mexico.

The Biden administration’s troubles securing the southern border have allowed Mexican drug cartels to ship massive amounts of fentanyl into the United States, former officials said.

James Carroll, a White House drug czar under Mr. Trump, said his agreement with Mr. Xi resulted in a sharp decline in direct fentanyl shipments, only to have the supply routes redirected to Mexico.

Mr. Carroll said the diminished shipments of fentanyl from China show that Beijing can stop the illicit trade if it wants. “[The Chinese] denied they were sending it to Mexico,” he said in an interview.

The failure to control the border with Mexico is a major factor in the increased fentanyl imports. “Almost all the fentanyl that is in the U.S. has come across the southwest border,” Mr. Carroll said.

Uttam Dhillon, acting administrator of the Drug Enforcement Administration during the Trump administration, predicted that the suspension of counternarcotics talks would lead to an increase in fentanyl shipments and a rise in overdose deaths of Americans.

Any lack of cooperation with any country — but especially with a country like China that is already providing the Mexican drug cartels with enormous amounts of fentanyl, fentanyl precursors and methamphetamine precursors — will almost certainly result in an increase in the ability of the Mexican drug cartels to produce and distribute those drugs in the United States,” Mr. Dhillon said.

Large seizures of fentanyl indicate that traffickers are moving larger quantities of the drug into the United States than in previous years, he said.

The former acting DEA chief said the problem of Chinese drug trafficking has been compounded by a significant deterioration in the level of U.S.-Mexican law enforcement cooperation under President Biden and leftist Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador. Mexico’s government enacted legislation restricting DEA agents’ work and now requires the U.S. drug agency to disclose all aspects of its counternarcotics efforts to Mexican officials.

Given the corruption and links between Mexican law enforcement and drug organizations, the law has made it difficult for the DEA to work in the country, Mr. Dhillon said.

Extraditions from Mexico for drug-related prosecutions also have sharply declined, and Mexico City has halted DEA aircraft operations in the country.

“So the combination of China basically telling the U.S. they are no longer going to cooperate on drug trafficking issues, and the ability of Mexican drug traffickers to operate undeterred in Mexico without concerns about U.S. law enforcement, you’re creating a perfect storm for far more drugs entering this country,” Mr. Dhillon said.

Drug cartels control transportation corridors throughout Mexico and up to U.S. borders, he said.

The increase in illicit drug trafficking is not limited to fentanyl. The cartels also are increasing shipments of methamphetamine, cocaine and heroin.

“Almost certainly, you’ll see drug overdose deaths in all of those categories going up,” Mr. Dhillon said.

Mr. Carroll, the former drug czar, said the Biden administration did not appear to be putting pressure on China to crack down on fentanyl shipments to Mexico even before the cutoff of talks. The White House national drug control strategy issued in April emphasized bilateral engagement and multilateral cooperation as keys to dealing with the drug crisis.

A Congressional Research Service report issued last month said the Biden administration’s policy toward China in countering drugs seeks increased collaboration and continued engagement to reduce fentanyl precursor shipments.

After its cooperation, the Chinese government has voiced frustration that its efforts have not led to progress in other areas of its ties with the U.S., such as lowering trade tariffs imposed by Mr. Trump.

China also is upset by Treasury Department sanctions on 20 Chinese and Hong Kong entities linked to fentanyl trafficking.

Beijing threatened to cut off cooperation after the Institute of Forensic Science, a unit of the Ministry of Public Security (MPS), the federal police and intelligence service, was added to the Commerce Department's trading blacklist in May 2020. The blacklisting was imposed in response to the institute's reported role in the repression of ethnic Uyghurs in China's Xinjiang province.

Chinese counternarcotics cooperation appears to have been in trouble since before the Pelosi delegation's Taiwan visit on Aug. 2.

The Chinese government announced in September 2021 that the U.S. move to sanction the MPS institute "seriously affected China's examination and identification of fentanyl substances and hindered the operation of its fentanyl monitoring system." The government said the action "greatly affected China's goodwill to help" in counternarcotics.

The Congressional Research Service report said some U.S. goals for cooperation with China on curbing fentanyl "remain unmet."

After controlling some fentanyl precursors, China failed to take action to control other chemical precursors, including those identified as 4-AP, 1-boc-4-AP and norfentanyl.

Pandemic restrictions also prevented in-person meetings with the two U.S.-China forums that are the main conduits for the now-suspended talks, the Bilateral Drug Intelligence Working Group and the Counternarcotics Working Group.

### **A need for action**

A former State Department official said recent Chinese cooperation on counternarcotics was limited to dialogue, without action from Beijing.

"China wanted to do something abstract without taking specific actions," the former official said. "Beijing is hostile to the U.S. and, therefore, the cooperation talks sought to neutralize political elites while allowing fentanyl to do harmful things to the United States."

China has dismissed official U.S. concerns about the lack of counterdrug cooperation. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said the United States is to blame for the breakdown in anti-drug cooperation.

"The responsibility of undermining China-U.S. counternarcotics cooperation rests entirely with the U.S. side," Mr. Wang told reporters on Aug. 12.

Mr. Wang said the sanctions on the MPS Institute of Forensic Science undermined cooperation because the institute is in charge of detecting and controlling fentanyl-like substances.

The ending of counternarcotics talks was among eight punitive actions the Chinese government announced after the Pelosi visit to Taiwan. Beijing launched large-scale war games shortly after the visit that U.S. officials said appeared to be practice for an invasion of the self-ruled island state.

In addition to halting counternarcotics talks, the Chinese canceled three forums for U.S.-Chinese military talks.

Chinese cooperation on repatriating illegal immigrants and on transnational crime and talks on climate change were also suspended.

	<p>Mr. Carroll said the U.S. government needs to take greater action to identify and stop shipments of fentanyl, which he called a “weapon of mass destruction.”</p> <p>“We’re on track to have the highest record of fatal overdoses in the history of our country,” he said. “We need to attack the supply problem because we are making great strides in the U.S. on the demand side.”</p> <p>Progress is being made in treating addiction, but stopping drug imports must be a key element of a counterdrug strategy. “We need to hold China and Mexico accountable,” he said.</p> <p>Said Mr. Dhillon, the former acting DEA administrator: “In order to effectively attack America’s drug overdose problem, we need a secure southwest border, and Mexico must be forced to reengage and allow U.S. law enforcement to operate in Mexico effectively.”</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/31 UK: gas cars cheaper to run than EVs</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/aug/31/electric-shock-spike-uk-energy-prices-push-cost-ru/">https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/aug/31/electric-shock-spike-uk-energy-prices-push-cost-ru/</a>
GIST	<p>Charging electric vehicles in Britain soon will be more expensive than filling up gasoline-powered cars thanks to soaring electricity costs — an economic switcheroo that could be a harbinger of shrinking financial benefits for Americans who go green.</p> <p>British energy regulators told electricity consumers to expect to pay 80% more beginning Oct. 1. The national price cap on residential electricity will send the average bill from about \$190 per month to an estimated \$343 per month, or more than \$4,000 per year.</p> <p>The shocking price hike stems from the nation’s limited reserves and Russia’s cutoff of one of the region’s major sources of electricity generation: natural gas. British energy prices eclipsed those of many other Europeans because the nation lacks domestic energy storage and production of natural gas, nuclear and renewables, making it more reliant on imports.</p> <p>Kenny Stein, policy director of the Institute for Energy Research, warned that the financial hardship in Europe from rising energy prices is an omen for Americans if the U.S. transitions from fossil fuels to renewables faster than the supply can handle.</p> <p>“For the U.S., this actually gets to an underlying fallacy of a lot of people that are pushing electric vehicles: They assert electric vehicles are cheaper because they assume electricity prices are going to stay cheap,” Mr. Stein said. “You’re combining the increased demands on electricity. That means you’ve got to build a new generation.”</p> <p>The U.S. is making a major pivot toward electric vehicles. President Biden’s climate spending law is pumping billions of dollars into the production of EVs and providing tax credits to people who buy them.</p> <p>California last week announced a phaseout of the sale of new gasoline-powered vehicles beginning in 2026. The deadline to end sales of new gasoline-powered cars is 2035. Many other Democratic-run states are expected to follow California’s lead.</p> <p>British electricity prices will nearly double from about 33 cents per kilowatt-hour to 60 cents per kilowatt-hour, making electric vehicles cost more before and after owners drive them off the lot. The average electricity cost in the U.S. is less than 11 cents per kilowatt-hour, according to the Energy Information Administration.</p> <p>With British electricity prices climbing and gasoline at roughly \$7.40 per gallon, the owner of a \$40,000 electric Kia Niro would spend more than \$100 more to travel 400 miles than the owner of a \$26,000 gas-powered Kia Sportage, according to an analysis by the Royal Automobile Club, the British equivalent of the AAA.</p>

A \$71,000 Jaguar I-PACE would cost nearly \$115 more to go 400 miles than its gas-powered equivalent, the \$52,000 Jaguar F-PACE.

London-based Electrifying.com has a slightly rosier outlook. It estimates that the average electric vehicle user now saves 27% on fuel, less than 75% a year ago. With the higher electricity prices, an electric Volkswagen ID.3 crossover that travels 10,000 miles per year will save \$34 per month on fuel compared with the gas-powered VW Golf of a similar size.

The price jump of electricity will make the hardest impact on drivers who use public charging stations and pay higher energy taxes. Those who travel long distances or do not have access to an at-home charger will bear more of the burden. Electricity prices at public charging stations are cruising to almost 81 cents per kilowatt-hour.

Mr. Stein said the U.S. is in a much better position than Britain to weather fluctuating electricity costs because of its more robust production of the oil and natural gas used for power generation.

The average electricity cost in California is one of the highest in the country at 18 cents per kilowatt-hour, according to EIA data from 2020, the most recent year available. Although California's cost is almost 70% higher than the national average of 10.59 cents per kilowatt-hour, it is about one-third of the new British price.

Rising U.S. natural gas prices have increased electricity costs. In July, Americans' electricity bills climbed to their highest levels since 2008 and were nearly 90% higher than the same time last year.

Natural gas is trading above \$9 per million British thermal units. The price a year ago was about \$3.50.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/31 Reading, math scores drop sharply</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.king5.com/article/news/nation-world/reading-math-scores-fell-pandemic/507-255f1980-8179-4fb9-9837-89e1e2a100b9">https://www.king5.com/article/news/nation-world/reading-math-scores-fell-pandemic/507-255f1980-8179-4fb9-9837-89e1e2a100b9</a>
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON — Math and reading scores for America's 9-year-olds fell dramatically during the first two years of the pandemic, according to a new federal study — offering an early glimpse of the <a href="#">sheer magnitude of the learning setbacks</a> dealt to the nation's children.</p> <p><a href="#">Reading scores</a> saw their largest decrease in 30 years, while math scores had their first decrease in the history of the testing regimen behind the study, according to the National Center for Education Statistics, a branch of the U.S. Education Department.</p> <p>The declines hit all regions of the country and affected students of most races. But students of color saw some of the steepest decreases, widening the racial achievement gap.</p> <p>Much of the nation's standardized testing didn't happen during the early days of the pandemic, so the findings released Thursday gave an early look at the <a href="#">impact of pandemic learning disruptions</a>. Broader data is expected to be released later this year as part of the National Assessment of Educational Progress, also known as the Nation's Report Card.</p> <p>“These are some of the largest declines we have observed in a single assessment cycle in 50 years of the NAEP program,” said Daniel McGrath, the acting associate commissioner of NCES. “Students in 2022 are performing at a level last seen two decades ago.”</p> <p>The study reflects two years of upheaval in American education as schools shut down for months at a time amid COVID-19 outbreaks. Many students spent a year or more learning from home, and virus outbreaks among staff and students continued the disruption even after kids returned to the classroom.</p>



	<p>In math, the average score for 9-year-old students fell 7 percentage points between 2020 and 2022, according to the study. The average reading score fell 5 points.</p> <p>The pandemic's upheaval especially hurt students of color. Math scores dropped by 5 percentage points for white students, compared with 13 points for Black students and 8 points for Hispanic students. The divide between Black and white students widened by 8 percentage points during the pandemic.</p> <p>Decreases were more uniform in reading: Scores dropped 6 points for white, Black and Hispanic students. For Asian American students, Native American students and students of two or more races, there was little change in reading or math between 2020 and 2022, the study found.</p> <p>Geographically, all regions saw decreases in math, but declines were slightly worse in the Northeast and Midwest compared with the West and South. Outcomes were similar for reading, except that the West had no measurable difference compared with 2020.</p> <p>Although it marks a sharp drop since 2020, the average reading score was 7 points higher than it was in 1971, and the average math score was 15 points higher than in 1978, the study found.</p> <p>Overall, the results paint a “sobering picture” of schooling during the pandemic, said Peggy Carr, commissioner of the NCES.</p> <p>Federal officials say this is the first nationally representative study to compare student achievement before the pandemic and in 2022, when most students had returned to in-person learning. Testing was completed in early 2020, soon before the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic, and in early 2022.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/31 Amtrak service to Vancouver BC resumes</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/amtrak-cascades-service-vancouver-bc-resumes-after-2-year-pause-due-pandemic/ZQUZ3JOLZRCPPZPNKCPUDQ264QA/">https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/amtrak-cascades-service-vancouver-bc-resumes-after-2-year-pause-due-pandemic/ZQUZ3JOLZRCPPZPNKCPUDQ264QA/</a>
GIST	<p>Amtrak announced Wednesday that it will resume its Amtrak Cascades service to Vancouver, British Columbia starting Monday, Sept. 26.</p> <p>The service had originally been paused in 2020 due to COVID-19 international border restrictions.</p> <p>The first Cascades train to Vancouver will leave Seattle at 7:45 a.m. on Sept. 26, stopping at five cities before arriving in Vancouver at 11:45 a.m.</p> <p>The southbound Cascades train will leave Vancouver at 5:45 p.m. and arrive in Seattle at 10:10 p.m.</p> <p>Amtrak said the round trip will be offered daily and it plans to add a second daily trip when staffing and equipment allow.</p> <p>The Amtrak Cascades service also offers three daily round trips between Portland, Oregon and Seattle, and two daily round trips between Eugene, Oregon and Portland.</p> <p>Amtrak also offers two daily buses between Bellingham and Seattle, as well as four daily buses between Seattle and Vancouver.</p> <p>Tickets can be purchased at <a href="https://www.amtrak.com">Amtrak.com</a>, <a href="https://www.AmtrakCascades.com">AmtrakCascades.com</a>, the Amtrak app, Amtrak ticket desks and kiosks, and by calling 1-800-USA-RAIL.</p> <p>For travelers leaving from Canada, tickets can be booked at <a href="https://www.ViaRail.ca">ViaRail.ca</a> and through 1-888-VIA-RAIL.</p>

	<p>Non-U.S. citizens traveling into the country must be fully vaccinated with an approved COVID-19 vaccine.</p> <p>Passengers traveling into Canada must use the ArriveCAN app before travel and wear a mask in Canadian stations and aboard trains while traveling through the country. Non-Canadian citizens must be fully vaccinated and must carry the same vaccination record that was uploaded to the ArriveCAN app.</p>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>08/31 Strain of nationwide teacher shortage in WA</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/strain-nationwide-teacher-shortage-being-felt-washington-state/YUMEABVTOVHJB40AK7S3FGA6E/">https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/strain-nationwide-teacher-shortage-being-felt-washington-state/YUMEABVTOVHJB40AK7S3FGA6E/</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>There's a nationwide teacher shortage, and Washington state is not exempt.</p> <p>As students gear up to head back into the classroom, some officials are scrambling to make sure someone will be there to teach them on the first day of school.</p> <p>It's a situation that the state's Professional Educator Standards Board is calling a crisis.</p> <p>In fact, a national survey from earlier this year found that 90% of educators felt "very" or "somewhat" burned out.</p> <p>Data that KIRO 7 requested from Seattle Public Schools shows that between April and August of this year, 606 teachers left their jobs because of resignations, retirements, funding changes, and transfers.</p> <p>At the beginning of this month, the district still had 121 openings.</p> <p>KIRO 7 spoke with a Seattle teacher who shared some of the challenges that had her reconsidering her profession.</p> <p>She said budget cuts at her school added to her workload.</p> <p>Plus, schools were dealing with the pandemic challenges of online learning and returning to the classroom, on top of long-time issues like pay.</p> <p>"I've always wanted to teach since I was little," said Rachel Pendergast. "I never thought in a million years that I would (consider quitting), and I was. And I was like, 'I'm not sure what to do.'"</p> <p>She said she does not plan to quit, but at the same time, she can't afford to live in Seattle and actually works two jobs.</p>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>08/31 Ferry ridership highest since 2019</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/washington-ferry-ridership-highest-since-start-pandemic/S5POW4N7IZH2NOVUVFETBZ5EKI/">https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/washington-ferry-ridership-highest-since-start-pandemic/S5POW4N7IZH2NOVUVFETBZ5EKI/</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>As people start to plan for the busy Labor Day holiday weekend, Washington State Ferries announced Wednesday that ferry ridership has reached its highest levels since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>In a news release, WSF said that the system-wide vehicle count since the start of the peak travel summer season on June 19 is at 91% of pre-pandemic levels.</p> <p>Walk-on passengers have been slightly slower to return and are at just 62% of their pre-pandemic levels.</p> <p>In total, vehicle and walk-on summer ridership through Aug. 28 are at 82% of pre-pandemic levels.</p>

	<p>According to WSF, the Anacortes/San Juan Islands, Point Defiance/Tahlequah, and Mukilteo/Clinton routes are closest to their 2019 numbers.</p> <p>WSF continues to restore service on a route-by-route basis, as outlined in its <a href="#">COVID-19 Service Restoration Plan</a>.</p> <p>“Unfortunately, our crewing levels are not at a point yet where we can begin adding full service back to our next route — the Edmonds/Kingston route — even on a trial basis,” said Patty Rubstello, head of WSF. “Doing so would put our restored runs in jeopardy. Until then, we will continue to add a second vessel to that route daily as crewing allows.”</p> <p>WSF said that there will be holiday schedule changes for the Anacortes/San Juan Islands and Point Defiance/Tahlequah routes — as well as the Edmonds/Kingston route if supplemental service is added — on Labor Day, Monday, Sept. 5.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/31 Seattle teachers’ contract expires; strike?</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/seattle-teachers-demonstrate-front-schools-contract-expires/YOZBEKGSSRDNBDZMP6ZNUSXQCQ/">https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/seattle-teachers-demonstrate-front-schools-contract-expires/YOZBEKGSSRDNBDZMP6ZNUSXQCQ/</a>
GIST	<p>SEATTLE — On Wednesday morning, teachers were demonstrating in front of several schools because the union contract expires.</p> <p>“Nobody wants a strike, absolutely don’t, we need to have things in place so we are able to teach the students,” said Tamora Schoeneberg, a special education teacher at Arbor Heights Elementary School.</p> <p>The Seattle Education Association represents nearly 6,000 educators.</p> <p>The union is asking for special education and multilingual supports along with workload relief, and respectful pay.</p> <p>The district says current conversations focused on special education and multilingual support have “caused a delay in progress.”</p> <p>The district says they’ve shared proposals with the union based on recommendations from both SEA and Seattle Public Schools committees that include teachers, other educators, staff and family representatives who have created models to improve student services.</p> <p>Schoeneberg said the inclusion model the district wants to implement is a good idea but they need the proper training and more staff.</p> <p>“We need the support, the staffing and the planning time, which we’ve had zero so we can’t just jump into the classroom and do it; the district isn’t agreeing to that, and that’s what we need. The kids will suffer if they don’t get that, if they don’t get that they won’t get the proper education,” said Schoeneberg.</p> <p>The union hopes they can reach a tentative agreement with the district by the end of the day, but if that doesn’t happen the union will take action.</p> <p>“We have a general membership meeting later tonight to discuss what are those next steps, and yes, the conversation is going to be about whether we go ahead and authorize a strike, because we have a choice,” said Jennifer Matter, president of the Seattle Education Association.</p> <p>The district is supposed to start classes next Wednesday on Sept. 7.</p>

	Starting late is a risk Seattle teachers may be willing to take to get their students the help they say is necessary.
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HEADLINE	<b>08/31 Seattle schools cancel some bus routes</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.q13fox.com/news/seattle-public-schools-awards-78-more-bus-routes-to-first-student">https://www.q13fox.com/news/seattle-public-schools-awards-78-more-bus-routes-to-first-student</a>
GIST	<p><b>SEATTLE</b> - Just a week out from the start of the school year, <a href="#">Seattle Public Schools</a> has come to an agreement with First Student and startup competitor Zum to provide transportation to students.</p> <p>Washington's largest school district was embroiled in <a href="#">months of debates</a> over who would provide transportation for kids, and how many routes they would cover. The decision revolved around First Student, which faced <a href="#">hundreds of safety violations</a> which have since been <a href="#">settled with the state</a>, and Zum.</p> <p>The district came to a decision and contracted both, splitting a \$45 million budget and assigning each company 184 routes.</p> <p>On Wednesday, First Student announced it has agreed to take 78 school bus routes previously awarded to Zum. The startup admitted it lacked the drivers and buses to fulfill the terms of their contract, according to the news release.</p> <p>Despite this, SPS announced last week they would be <a href="#">canceling some bus routes due to staff shortages</a>.</p> <p>"It is the intent of the district to assign approximately half of its bus routes to each contractor. At the start of the 2022-23 school year, the district requested that First Student take on additional routes while Zum ramps up to its full capacity as anticipated over the first semester," the district said in a statement.</p> <p>First Student will cover the 78 additional routes until January, bringing its total to 262 routes.</p> <p>"As previously shared, some bus routes may not be in service for the start of the school year. We expect to be able to provide increased service as the school year progresses. SPS will share service updates and route information with families of students eligible for transportation," the district said.</p> <p>Families impacted by the routes that will not be in service will be notified before Sept. 7.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>09/01 Ukraine children return to school amid war</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/01/world/europe/pencil-chalk-and-first-aid-kits-ukrainian-children-return-to-school-in-the-midst-of-war.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/01/world/europe/pencil-chalk-and-first-aid-kits-ukrainian-children-return-to-school-in-the-midst-of-war.html</a>
GIST	<p>BUCHA, Ukraine — The bodies that littered the school playground in April are gone. The blood on the walls has been scrubbed clean and workers were working to repair shattered windows.</p> <p>Still, School No. 3 in the Kyiv suburb of Bucha, the site of some of the worst Russian atrocities of the war, will not open when classes begin on Thursday for millions of Ukrainian children whose families are struggling to educate them.</p> <p>That's because the basement of the school was used by Russian soldiers as a torture chamber, residents said. It is still considered a crime scene, and in Ukraine — where the Education Ministry estimates Russian bombs, rockets and shelled have struck more than 2,400 schools, leveling at least 270 — no school can open without a bomb shelter.</p> <p>For students like six-year-old Vera, who loves math and castles, that means remote learning. She had looked forward to the first day of school in Ukraine, when, as a new first grader, she would be hoisted on the shoulders of an older student to "ring the first bell," to start the school year and kick off a day of celebrations.</p>

“She does not want to start the school year taking classes online,” her mother, Lyudmila, as she took her daughter’s picture outside the school, holding the bell that she would not ring.

“It is a bleak and unwelcome experiment in childhood suffering,” James Elder, the spokesman for the United Nations Children’s Fund, said in an interview. “With thousands of schools damaged or destroyed, less than 60 percent are expected to open on time.”

The lack of a bomb shelter is just one of many challenges facing Ukraine’s schoolchildren and their teachers.

An estimated 2.8 million of the nation’s 6 million children have been forced from their homes because of the war. If they are fortunate enough to find a seat in a classroom, it will likely be in an unfamiliar town or city.

Another two million children are estimated to be living outside of Ukraine and will either log on remotely for schooling with Ukrainian teachers or try to integrate into new schools with classes taught in foreign tongues.

The challenges in government-controlled parts of Ukraine are daunting in their own right.

Teachers are receiving training in how to treat battlefield wounds and what to do in case they come across an unexploded ordnance. In addition to pens, paper and chalk, schools are being supplied with extra blankets, flashlights and first aid kits.

Unicef has reached around 1.7 million children and their caregivers offering psychological support. And they have dispatched 50 mobile teams to areas that are hard to reach because of the raging conflict.

“From Yemen to Syria, what we have learned is that children just absolutely need this psychological break from war,” Mr. Elder said. “And attending class plays a critical role in that.”

The fact that schools in Bucha and other hard-hit towns and cities across the country are opening at all is in many ways remarkable.

Anatolii Fedoruk, the mayor of Bucha, said that in the first days of the war, many families sought shelter in schools, thinking of them as places of refuge.

“They were wrong, they were not safe,” he said. During 32 days of Russian occupation, he said, schools were turned into firing positions and places of oppression.

He spoke outside School 5, where a tank had taken position in the schoolyard, the blackened walls of a high-rise apartment building across the street testimony to the violence.

Mr. Fedoruk credited the nonprofit Global Empowerment Mission and its founder, Michael Capponi, with providing the much needed assistance to get the town’s 15 schools rebuilt so that most could open on Sept. 1.

Mr. Capponi said it cost around \$80,000 to repair this one school but it was about much more than the building itself.

The construction project — with all locally sourced materials — puts people to work, he said. School opening means food service returning and more jobs. It is a cycle that builds on itself. Most importantly, he said, it is an important step in reversing the refugee crisis.

“One of the most difficult questions for parents considering returning is whether their children can go to school in a safe environment,” he said. “This is not a full postwar rebuild, this is about getting kids in classes and parents back home.”

HEADLINE	<b>09/01 UN IAEA team crosses buffer zone</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/09/01/world/ukraine-russia-war-news?">https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/09/01/world/ukraine-russia-war-news?</a>
GIST	<p>ZAPORIZHZHIA, Ukraine — Experts from the United Nations’ nuclear watchdog agency crossed into the buffer zone between the Russian and Ukrainian armies on Thursday morning, as shelling in the region increased over night and continued into the morning.</p> <p>The group, which includes 14 experts with the International Atomic Energy Agency, made a last-moment decision to proceed to the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant despite intense fighting overnight in the region. Ukraine’s energy agency said shelling had damaged parts of the plant, controlled by Russian forces but operated by Ukrainians, on Thursday. Frequent shelling has raised fears of a nuclear catastrophe.</p> <p>By dawn, the dull thud of artillery strikes along the frontline could be heard in the parking lot of the hotel in the southern Ukrainian city of Zaporizhzhia where the I.A.E.A. mission departed. Ukrainian and Russian-appointed officials were trading accusations early Thursday, with each side saying the other was putting the U.N. inspectors in peril.</p> <p>“We are aware of the current situation, there has been increased military activity,” Rafael M. Grossi, the agency’s secretary general, told reporters early Thursday. Mr. Grossi said the Ukrainian military had briefed him on the combat overnight near his planned route. “But weighing the pros and cons, and having come so far, we are not stopping,” he said. “We consider that we have the minimum conditions to move, accepting the risks are very, very high,” Mr. Grossi said.</p> <p>“We have a very important mission to accomplish.”</p> <p>Ukraine’s energy agency, Energoatom, said one of the power units at the Zaporizhzhia plant had to be shut down early Thursday as an emergency measure because of Russian shelling. A reserve power supply line was also damaged, the company wrote on its Telegram page.</p> <p>The gravest risks, Mr. Grossi said, would come as the column of armored S.U.V. vehicles crossed the so-called “gray zone,” or buffer area between the two armies, where neither side’s military holds sway.</p> <p>It is an area of fields cratered from artillery shelling. “We know the risks of the so-called gray zone, between the last line of Ukrainian defense and where the first line of Russian occupying forces begin,” Mr. Grossi said.</p> <p>The dangers in that area, “are significant,” he said. In the hours before the mission departed, Ukrainian officials reported barrages by rocket artillery and howitzers, and the flight of attack helicopters, in the town of Enerhodar, which lies along the route the nuclear monitors will travel.</p> <p>On Thursday, the Ukrainian head of the Zaporizhzhia region, Oleksandr Starukh, said the I.A.E.A. team were being held up by Russian shelling along the agreed route of travel. At the same time, Vladimir Rogov, an official in the Russian army’s occupation administration in the region surrounding the plant, accused Ukraine of carrying out “massive shelling” in the town of Enerhodar and attempting to disrupt the U.N. mission.</p> <p>As the team traveled south, they will cross the buffer zone and enter Russian occupied areas of southern Ukraine. It was unclear how long the inspectors would spend at the plant, or how quickly Moscow’s forces would allow them to pass through checkpoints on the Russian rim of the gray zone.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/31 Tacoma’s deadliest street as a war zone</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.thenewstribune.com/news/local/crime/article264204616.html#subtopper">https://www.thenewstribune.com/news/local/crime/article264204616.html#subtopper</a>



For months, Janelle Wright entered motel rooms in Tacoma, battleworn and scanning for threats, with two sharpened hatchets hanging from her hips.

The hazards that sometimes lurked behind the doors of HomeTowne Studios on South Hosmer Street could hide between the folds of bedsheets: a needle with unknown substances waiting to stick a careless hand. On other occasions, violent guests and trespassers posed a grave risk to her safety.

Wright, 40, said she chased people off the property and ran from those who attacked her when she accidentally startled them awake from drug-induced slumbers in rooms. She followed others who had guns. Unruly guests and unwelcome visitors caused havoc, leaving behind fentanyl and other hard drugs or paraphernalia.

At night, people would break into rooms. Guests would rip off latches and remove pins from room doors, leaving entryways exposed for them to illegally return. A security guard was brutally assaulted. Wright said she nearly got assailed at a nearby bus stop by a man huffing some drug.

When a beaten and bloodied victim pleaded for help after fleeing armed attackers from a motel across the street, Wright said she and other staff hunkered down with him for several hours in the front office until police showed up.

It would be a dangerous job for any law enforcement or security officer. Except Wright was a housekeeper.

“This is not Renton, this is not Kirkland, this is not Bellevue,” she said. “This is Hosmer. It’s basically its own town, it’s its own city, its own rules.”

A News Tribune investigation illustrates the chaos enveloping the deadliest street in Tacoma, South Hosmer Street, a commercial strip home to small businesses, homeless camps and the city’s biggest cluster of motels and hotels that have increasingly become a battleground in a desperate fight against rising crime. Stories shared by those who live and work there paint the corridor as a perilous place spiraling out of control.

After three homicides on South Hosmer Street between 2020 and 2021, there have been five reported so far this year, more than any other street in the city. Each occurred within a three-block radius near the corridor’s southernmost tip. All were connected to an open or shuttered motel or hotel.

The troubling stories at HomeTowne Studios, which prompted Wright to quit her job in July, are alarmingly frequent throughout the corridor in Tacoma’s South End.

South Hosmer Street — which former Tacoma Mayor Bill Baarsma was “almost certain” was named after city pioneer Theodore Hosmer, the Hosmer House namesake — runs adjacent to Interstate 5 in the south central part of a diverse district made up of working families, many of whom travel elsewhere for jobs, according to Councilman Joe Bushnell, who represents it. The area has historically lacked investment, he said.

Driving down the relatively non-descript five-lane street, motorists will find a central gas station, a Chinese seafood restaurant and a Jehovah’s Witness church among the rows of motels, hotels and other establishments, which include a few strip malls offering standard fare: manicures, massage, smoking products and coin laundry, for example.

The street has “always been a problem,” according to Stephen Hagberg, the city’s Community Police Advisory Committee chairman, who said he grew up less than a mile away from the strip.

“During the ‘80s, we had problems with the gangs. That went away for a while; things got better,” he said. “Now we’re into a whole different world, with shootings and drugs going along on Hosmer, making things worse again.”

The nature of crime is different now too, because it is more random, according to Patricia Barre, who returned to her childhood home on 90th Street near the corridor eight years ago.

“It’s frightening, truthfully. I have a whole security system. I have cameras all around my house,” Barre said, noting that people constantly walk past her home at all hours. “I feel like I live in my own prison.”

The economically struggling area, which scores “very low” in overall equity in a city ranking system, has been marred by an increase in open-air drug use, shootings and general lawlessness, according to businesses and neighbors.

There has been a fair amount of finger-pointing and deflection for the street’s troubles.

People who run businesses there criticized short-staffed law enforcement for slow or non-existent responses to calls and the city for inaction. They said that people experiencing homelessness were causing at least some of the problems. Police said each call was unique, they answered requests for aid by prioritizing violent offenses over property crimes and that often people assume officers did not show up to a scene only because officers did not make contact with them. City officials said that they have made South Hosmer Street a focal point.

Homeless service providers argued that unhoused people were an easy target for blame yet just as vulnerable to the street’s dangers as anyone. Motel and hotel managers insisted that they are doing their utmost to keep trouble at bay under chaotic conditions.

“It’s very hard every day to try to come to work in a war zone,” said Taran Johal, manager at the family-run Rothem Inn.

In interviews with business proprietors, neighbors and others, there was disagreement over whether the street had hit rock bottom and was slightly improving or if it was mid-plummet with the worst yet to come. Wright said she and other former and current HomeTowne Studios employees had reached a consensus.

“Them cheap hotels need to be shut down because it’s attracting so much,” she said.

Any beliefs that the corridor could be rescued are tempered by acknowledgments that it will be a lengthy endeavor.

“I don’t see anything changing quickly at all,” said Tami Rasmussen, the former regional manager at the since-sold Econo Lodge. “It’s going to take an awful lot of time.”

The motel, which will transition into low-income housing, garnered a particularly menacing reputation. The presence of drugs, prostitution and human trafficking of young girls were commonplace, according to Rasmussen. Staff carried mace and Tasers.

She said the motel has gotten worse since it changed hands in March. Younger gang members and people experiencing homelessness seized deserted, boarded-up rooms, she said. Shootings are a regular occurrence.

So unnerved by crime in the area, the new owners, Sage Investment Group, took the bold step of trying to engage drug dealers, including one self-described “King of the Econo Lodge,” to see what it might take to move them out of the area, according to Emily Hubbard, the company’s co-founder.

“They all, of course, want large paper bags full of cash,” Hubbard said.

There are efforts underway by law enforcement and city officials to address immediate and deep-rooted issues on the commercial strip, including with increased police presence and by engaging business leaders and others to participate in a long-term solution.

Tacoma Police Chief Avery Moore told The News Tribune in June that at least part of the corridor would receive more police attention under the department's hot-spot plan, which will be data-driven and focused on crime-prone addresses in the city.

Neighbors who recently spoke with the newspaper in the 90th Street neighborhood near South Hosmer Street reported a heightened police presence over the past month or so, including police vehicles parked in the corridor's center lanes.

"Officers know that Hosmer is an area where there has been a lot of violent crime," said Tacoma Police Department Lt. Jeff Katz, the community policing division commander for the area. "They know where they're going."

Katz said he could not pinpoint one specific reason why the corridor has been so troubled, except to say that "it's a complex web of social and historical factors that lead to that."

Recent pandemic-era and legislative policies also have affected how police respond to calls, he said. Pierce County Jail booking restrictions limiting bed space to largely the most serious offenders has eliminated jail as an option for lower-level illegal activity, such as property crime and trespassing, and state laws passed last year dictate when and how law enforcement may use force.

Bushnell, the councilman, said he is working with the community to come up with the long-term course of action, which he hopes will bring systemic change to the area.

"It's not fast enough. People are hurting now," he said. "Right now, the future looks bleak."

Those who live nearby have added home security systems, noticed more gated yards in their neighborhood than before and limited their children's outside play.

"With the bullets flying and stuff, it's not safe," said Kristy Enick, who lives in a neighborhood on 90th Street.

#### CRIME ON THE CORRIDOR

The number of crimes reported on South Hosmer Street, from 72nd to 96th streets, increased nearly 72 percent from 2014 to 2021, according to a News Tribune analysis of South Sound 911 data, which excludes domestic violence and sexual-related offenses, as well as incidents still subject to ongoing investigations.

Most of those incidents occurred between the 7900 and 8800 blocks — a roughly half-mile section where reported crimes more than doubled from 219 in 2014 to 447 last year, the analysis found.

Data through July 16 showed that the crime rate was on pace to slightly increase this year.

While rising violent and property crime is a citywide problem with particular hot spots, South Hosmer Street stands out: Data shows that a significant chunk of its 1.5-mile stretch has been among the highest-crime areas in Tacoma.

Since 2014, eight South Hosmer Street blocks rank in the top 40 of city blocks with the most reported offenses, according to the analysis, appearing more often than any other street on that list.

Charelle Gogue said she has already grown familiar with the sounds of police sirens and gunshots in the month since she moved into her parents' 90th street home after relocating from Guam in July.

"I don't know if it's a shooting or fireworks," said Gogue, 33, as she found reprieve from a beating early August sun underneath a front-yard canopy. "It's hard to tell sometimes."

Her parents, who have lived there for a decade, were not strangers to the reputation of the corridor: It was the “devil’s playground,” she said they had told her.

The 8800 block of South Hosmer Street, the area that includes Wright’s former employer and the Econo Lodge, had the 11th most crimes reported since 2014, the News Tribune analysis found. The adjacent 8700 block ranked 16th.

A major shopping center immediately north of South Hosmer Street – the 1900 block of 72nd Street – ranked third.

The source of the most reported crimes since 2014 came from a block much further north that includes the Tacoma Mall – largely general theft, shoplifting, stolen vehicles and theft from vehicles – highlighting what the data showed elsewhere: Commercial hubs in Tacoma are generally the most exposed to illegal activities.

That includes violent crime, unlike in larger cities, which see it most at multifamily housing developments, according to Mike Smith, Criminal Justice Department chair at the University of Texas at San Antonio.

Smith, who helped develop the city’s recently revealed hot-spot initiative, said in an email that it was unclear why violent crime in Tacoma happens in the clusters that it does, though perhaps part of the reason is that the city has comparatively fewer large, low-income apartment complexes.

Evidence suggests that three factors needed to exist for a crime to occur, he said: A suitable victim, a motivated offender and a lack of a capable guardian.

The troubles on South Hosmer Street have been, in some ways, a microcosm for the city, where violent crime has nearly doubled in the past 12 months, including 31 homicides so far in 2022, which is on pace to break the record of 33 set in 1994 and again last year.

The corridor has seen a spate of dangerous incidents this year.

A hotel employee shot and injured a knife-wielding man who attacked two workers and a bystander; Tacoma firefighters were reportedly threatened by a large crowd of people — some armed with guns — at a motel as they treated an unresponsive patient, prompting a massive police response; and a man pointed a firearm at passing vehicles and others, allegedly pulling the trigger twice while aiming at a security guard, but the gun did not fire.

Residents of the 90th Street neighborhood described how the dangers down the road can spill into their own driveways. After a woman banged on her door at 3 a.m., seeking help after she had been shot at leaving the Econo Lodge, Enick said she was left so uneasy that she recently obtained a license to carry a concealed weapon.

Enick, 38, has lived in the neighborhood for 10 years. She said she believed that South Hosmer Street’s crime problem was drug-related and fueled by certain motels. The Econo Lodge, she said, was the epicenter.

Joyce Maina, who runs a home for adults in need of care in the neighborhood, said she will not step out at night and tells clients not to leave the house unaccompanied. Still, Maina, 53, said hers is a tight-knit area where neighbors watch over each other, and she believes it had become more peaceful as of late.

“It’s hard to tell” if that peace will last, she said.

There is no doubt that some of the lodging properties on the strip have contributed to the escalation of crime, according to Bushnell, although he did not fault the establishments. Instead he blamed drug dealers for using them to target people struggling with addiction and thus bringing other criminal activity often associated with the trade.

The city has considered corrective action on certain properties on South Hosmer Street by applying a code that targets chronic nuisance establishments, based on the occurrence of specific recurring activities such as illegal drug activity, prostitution and disorderly conduct, although no actions had been taken as of late August, according to city Tax and License manager Danielle Larson.

Most often, city spokesperson Maria Lee said, city officials have been able to resolve issues without using the code.

#### PROLIFERATION OF PROBLEMS

Wright arrived at HomeTowne Studios in August last year through a smartphone app for temporary jobs.

Moving from Seattle to work, Wright said she was oblivious to the violence and drugs that awaited her. It was an ordinary first day. Within a week, a coworker quit after being pricked by a needle left on a bed. Wright quickly became accustomed to being on high alert.

“I’m looking at my surroundings immediately, before I even come into the building,” Wright said. “I’ll see who’s creeping, who’s trying to get in on the side doors, who’s getting high.”

Wright said she started off cleaning rooms by herself, but, as problems worsened, housekeepers began teaming up in pairs. She liked to listen to music during work — often upbeat tunes to help stay positive. When Wright smelled drama, though, she tuned in to metal: Rammstein’s aggressive “Du Hast” was a favorite.

Issues among coworkers and dangerous situations led Wright to leave her job several times, but she always returned because she had bills to pay, she said, and needed the roughly \$20 an hour she was earning in a supervisory role by the end of her employment. Wright said her predecessor had made less than \$15.

It was not until her final tenure that her housekeeping uniform became battle-ready. She bought her first hatchet at Lowe’s. The second was a gift from a long-time worker who often acted as impromptu security. Wright said that while she “almost” had to use her weapons, she never did.

South Hosmer Street is home to nine of the city’s 23 currently licensed hotels and motels, according to city data. An operating Motel 6 — technically on 76th Street but facing Hosmer Street — received the 10th city license in the immediate area in August.

The corridor had been even more congested prior to the recent sale and closures of some lodging properties, including the Comfort Inn, Howard Johnson and Econo Lodge.

On a street known for trouble, the proliferation of motels and hotels is in the thick of it — a few more frequently and severely than others.

In January, Demonte Williams, 29, was discovered shot in the Howard Johnson motel parking lot — the first of five homicides on South Hosmer Street thus far this year. Each had a similar theme: a person shot, or at least found shot, in a lodging establishment parking lot. Or in the case of 40-year-old Joshua Ferrell — his motel room.

In two of the four cases where an arrest had been made as of late August, charging documents provided potential motives for the slayings: A possible drug robbery and a domestic argument. In another case, an altercation preceded the gun violence. In another, the victim was killed in a drive-by shooting.

Police calls for service at 12 motels and hotels on South Hosmer Street collectively grew more than 24 percent from 2018 to 2021, a News Tribune analysis found, reflecting data for some properties that have since ceased operations after being sold.

Most often, people sought police intervention at three lodging establishments: the Econo Lodge, HomeTowne Studios and the Howard Johnson — sites of four of the five reported homicides this year.

Between 2018 and 2021, the three properties collectively drew more than 3,900 calls for service, according to the News Tribune's analysis. Nine other hotels or motels on the street — including the Holiday Inn Express, where one homicide was reported this year — together prompted fewer than 3,500 calls (It is worth noting that, for 15 months until July 2021, the Holiday Inn Tacoma Mall operated as a Pierce County COVID-19 isolation and quarantine center).

The new owners of the now fenced-off Howard Johnson motel, which was sold in June 2021 and is no longer licensed for lodging activity, did not return messages. Emails sent to addresses that records indicated belonged to the motel's former owners also went unanswered.

Lori Chandler, district manager at Westmont Hospitality Group, which owns HomeTowne Studios, raised many of the same concerns as Wright. Although the company did not permit staff to carry weapons, "I get it," she said.

"The city doesn't have control," Chandler said. "The criminals have control and they know that."

The Econo Lodge, the site of two homicides this year — one after it closed — and four since 2020, averaged more than one call for service per day from 2018 to 2021, more than any other motel or hotel on South Hosmer Street, the data shows.

The 1,600-plus calls that originated from the motel over that period were most frequently for welfare checks, disturbances, reports of an unwanted subject and 911 reports where the caller could not be contacted, according to the data.

The reason behind the high volume of calls was simple: The motel needed a lot of help, according to Rasmussen, the former regional manager at the Econo Lodge, who retains the role for the Quality Inn & Suites under the same ownership.

"I expected police to do their job," she said.

#### 'WHAT CAN WE DO?' HOTELS AT A LOSS

The Econo Lodge was, and continues to be, a magnet for drugs, human trafficking and other nefarious behavior, according to Rasmussen. She said that she and other motel staff would filter guests, require identification — including for visitors — and call the police on bad actors. Often, people ejected for trespassing would migrate to a nearby lodging establishment, get kicked out and try elsewhere, creating a flow of unwanted traffic.

For two years, some 60 people stayed at the motel without paying rent, causing issues that were fueled by drugs, gang activity and prostitution, she said. They could not be removed due to the pandemic-related eviction moratorium in place at the time, she added, costing the establishment north of \$1 million in lost revenue.

Since the Econo Lodge's sale and closure in March, Rasmussen claimed that an estimated 50 squatters had taken up quarters there, and at least some who congregated at that motel wandered over to the adjacent Quality Inn to cause problems.

Someone recently broke into a Quality Inn room and, after security went inside, sprayed the entire floor with bear spray, forcing guests to check out. Rasmussen watched an employee shoot an assailant armed with a knife. She said she has had a gun pointed in her face by someone breaking into a vehicle. A guest and a housekeeper were nearly struck by a stray bullet through a window.

"Who wants to wonder about, are you going to be alive if you come to work today?" she said.



Room rentals were down 60 percent this year, she said, and the owners have considered selling that property, too.

“You can’t continue to run a business like that,” she said. “You won’t survive. Just won’t survive.”

Those who run other motels or hotels on the corridor suggested their establishments, not unlike other types in the area, were at the whim of the environment despite their efforts to fend off blatant criminal activity.

Law-abiding guests could be unwittingly thrust into an unpredictable climate. The customer base has become almost exclusively local since the pandemic, at least at some motels, although tourists and out-of-towners still stop by. On occasion, Wright has offered would-be patrons a warning.

“Every night we get somebody’s room being broken in(to), somebody trying to break in your room either through your door or through your window,” she recalled explaining to one group which ended up not sticking around. “Which one do you prefer?”

At the Rothem Inn, most guests are working people who, perhaps with an eviction or two on their record, are in need of a relatively inexpensive place to sleep and shower as they get back on their feet, according to Johal, the motel’s manager.

“People will pay more to not have to stay in this area,” he said.

Like other properties, the Rothem Inn has faced problems with nefarious foot traffic and guests. Johal said lobby windows had twice been smashed in the past two years, and a maintenance worker was struck by a glass bottle heaved by an unruly patron.

“As business owners, we can only combat so much,” he said, rattling off the motel’s security measures, including implementing a no-visitor policy and denying access to people who appeared to be on drugs or intoxicated, as he called for more police intervention and criminal accountability.

Right now, he added, it is “a slow death of all of us.”

Chandler, who oversees HomeTowne Studios, said the motel has experienced guests overstaying their welcome, collecting zero rent from 27 rooms for two years amid a legal battle that remains ongoing. The vast majority of those room occupants were involved in criminal acts, she said.

“It’s not a homeless person looking for shelter,” she said about the street’s bad actors. “There’s always something else to it.”

The predictability of facing that “something else” prompted the motel to recently enact a no-cash payment system, and its next step is to cease renting rooms to locals, according to Chandler. This year, the motel installed more than \$20,000 worth of fencing, closed off one of two entrances into the property, hired daily night guards and brightened the interior and exterior with LED lighting.

“I can’t do anymore than what we’re already doing,” she said. “It’s really exhausting for all of us.”

Shay Pate is general manager of the Holiday Inn Tacoma Mall on South Hosmer Street. Pate said the hotel has dealt with a rash of vehicle break-ins in the parking lot, despite maintaining security. As others did, Pate said she felt as if the bulk of responsibility to address the street’s woes was being put on business owners.

“We’re so busy keeping homeless people out of our lobbies and damaging our property, it’s like, ‘What can we do?’” she said.

The precariousness of the situation has enveloped those entrenched in the most dire circumstances.

Living conditions were not ideal at the largely boarded-up Econo Lodge in early July: The grounds were littered with trash, and people who remained in a room overwhelmed by personal artifacts said they had no hot water. A gated fence outside abutted the room's back window, creating an obvious hazard in the event of a fire.

Evelyn Horton, 93, who shared the room with a granddaughter and others, acknowledged being only partially aware of her circumstances: They moved into the motel in November and changed units in February. The building had been sold, and she was not sure how they were paying rent.

"I don't know what's going on now, to tell you the truth," Horton said from bed, lamenting the fact that she had not been able to shower for quite some time.

Horton was there during a shooting but said she did not see anything. She later moved in with a relative, while her granddaughter stayed behind.

Hubbard, co-founder of the company that bought the Econo Lodge, said that about a dozen rooms remained inhabited as of late July, as a result of holdover rental agreements between the former owner and people who could not be immediately evicted due to pandemic-era rules.

The immediate area remains dangerous.

Hubbard said contractors were shot at while performing demolition work on two unoccupied buildings, readying for the property's forthcoming transition into low-income housing. The investment group installed watchtower surveillance cameras, which she said assisted law enforcement in making significant drugs and weapons busts, but the cameras were shot at, too.

"It's definitely very much a hotbed of illegal activity, and it is affecting our business," Hubbard said.

At a laundromat just a block north, an employee noted that a vehicle had crashed into a neighboring market's front windows.

Mark, the employee, who did not provide his last name, said that people have entered the laundromat defiantly smoking cigarettes and that he has to kick out people sleeping on the sidewalks in front of the property every morning.

"Hosmer has always had action," said Jimmy Brown, a worker who provides homeless services. "It's just never been, I want to say, this bad."

#### DESPERATE TIMES ON THE STREETS

Homeless service providers concede that South Hosmer Street is tough, but, although they remain vigilant, they do not feel unsafe.

They also said it is unfair to lay broad blame at the feet of the area's considerable number of unhoused people, who they saw as too often marginalized and broadly caught in the crossfire of violence.

Like business owners who suggested they were casualties of the street's hazards, service providers who frequently visit the street said people experiencing homelessness too were vulnerable, whether it be having belongings stolen or, in some cases, drug addictions exploited.

The street's access to drugs makes it an attractive destination for people struggling with addiction, including those experiencing homelessness, according to Brown, a team member with Comprehensive Life Services, which offers mental health assistance to unhoused people and others.

The concentration of lodging establishments has "made the area more exposed to that kind of activity," said Luis Rivera Zayas, who is part of a homeless outreach team for the Tacoma Rescue Mission that visits South Hosmer Street several times weekly.

He said he knew of one group that disappears for a week when benefits arrive to spend their money on a room and indulge in “bad behaviors.”

Other times, the drug use occurs in the open, as recently witnessed by The News Tribune on 82nd Street, where a row of tents was set up between The Best Western Plus and Hampton Inn & Suites.

Desperate strangers are often faced with making a quick call about whether to join together to afford a room for a few nights, according to Joe Perva, who works for the Low Income Housing Institute, which operates Aspen Court, a temporary homeless shelter in the former Comfort Inn.

The resulting dynamic, particularly when involving other factors such as substance abuse, can be complex and volatile and breed conflict.

“It’s easy to get lost in a setting like that when you feel like people don’t care,” Perva said.

Stephanie Fallon, the homeless outreach manager for Comprehensive Life Services, emphasized that not everyone seeks out unlawful activity on South Hosmer Street. More so, she said, people experiencing homelessness are in “survival mode” and want to be near others who can protect them, which has thrust them into the corridor’s bad environment.

With resources lacking — including housing, mental-health treatment and substance-abuse programs — moving encampments simply meant shifting the problem elsewhere, Fallon said.

There are larger encampments in the city than on South Hosmer Street, according to service providers. Federal pandemic-era guidance not to disrupt such camps has made them generally more prevalent since 2020 and perhaps more visible on the condensed, commercial road.

#### **BUSINESSES BAND TOGETHER**

Perva was the lead organizer when area business leaders convened in May for the first monthly meeting of the Hosmer Business Association, a new consortium focused on improving the neighborhood. In April, he walked the street alongside Mayor Victoria Woodards, Moore and others.

Those efforts align with the first two phases of Bushnell’s five-step process to bring meaningful progress to South Hosmer Street: to orient and organize. The third phase is engagement, which Bushnell said will precede creating a vision and identifying funding sources, and then executing the plan.

While the group’s formation presents a potential for grant funding and a new avenue to workshop solutions, it is also only the most recent attempt from area stakeholders seeking to improve South Hosmer Street. Local resident groups have been at work, too, according to Darren Pen, a community mobilization specialist for Safe Streets Campaign, a grassroots neighborhood safety organization.

Pate recalled similar business-group meetings when the Holiday Inn Tacoma Mall was remodeled in 2018. She understood how such an association could help with landscaping, streetlights and covering up graffiti.

“But the unsafe situations?” she asked. “Why is that falling on us?”

Lee, the city spokeswoman, pointed to recent outreach efforts, including the visit from Woodards and other city officials to learn about the specific concerns of people who live and work in the area, as a sign that Tacoma was focused on improving South Hosmer Street.

“Ultimately, we want Tacoma to be a safe, thriving, healthy community,” she said in an email. “We value all community members, including property and business owners, and the Hosmer area continues to be a major priority for us.”

When the Hosmer Business Association met for a second time in June, its members came with concerns for Moore, the police chief, who spoke and listened to the group of roughly 45 people gathered inside the Tacoma Nursing & Rehabilitation Center, just south of where South Hosmer Street ends.

They again stressed that they felt police were too often sluggish or unresponsive to calls for help.

“When we called for action because we’re being assaulted, basically what I was told when I called was, if I’m actively being shot at, you’ll come out,” said Julie Duncan, a former prison guard and then the general manager for HomeTowne Studios. “Otherwise you’re not going to come.”

Moore said police were doing their jobs, but he noted the force has to prioritize violent crimes over other calls.

“A murder takes precedent over everything,” he said. “Property crime’s important, but not as important as someone being physically assaulted. But we don’t just not show up.”

Other businesses wanted guidance on when to call 911 and how to report vehicles without license plates; one apartment manager described drug dealers shutting down an entire side street at certain hours; another decried the exorbitant costs of hiring off-duty officers for security.

Some agreed that homelessness and brazen drug use presented bigger issues for lodging establishments than the COVID-19 pandemic, which brought staffing shortages and a 62 percent drop in business across Washington, according to an industry group.

Moore, who acknowledged the severity of the drug problem and described being shocked by the homelessness in the area, suggested that there would be no change without the community working in tandem with the city and police.

“It’s literally everybody’s responsibility, and if we don’t accept that responsibility, we will always have a crime problem,” he said.

#### AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE

Whatever it might ultimately be, the path toward fixing South Hosmer Street appears steep, according to people interviewed for this story.

The demand for housing, mental-health and substance-abuse resources far outweighs the current supply, often presenting barriers for people experiencing homelessness. The police department was short some 50 officers as of February. The street is not pedestrian friendly. The historical problems on South Hosmer Street have left its bad stigma deeply entrenched.

“Currently you don’t want to walk around at night out there,” Bushnell said.

Most people interviewed were not encouraged that meaningful change was underway.

“Do I have hope? Absolutely,” said Chandler, the HomeTowne Studios representative. “Am I optimistic right now? No.”

Meanwhile, Wright no longer has to worry about “playing Robo Cop” the moment she shows up to work. Duncan also quit in July, not long after saying she felt unsafe and unable to protect her staff.

For Wright, stints at the hotel beginning last year affected her personal life. The job required wearing a tough exterior, which she worried might not be easily shed. She said she often felt overwhelmed and had been suicidal at one point.

“I’ve been in North Philly, South Philly, you know, Dallas, Texas. I’ve had to protect myself (from) gang violence and everything else,” she said. “By far, this little strip is the worst strip I have ever encountered.”

	<p>Wright is still working as a housekeeper, but in downtown Seattle, at a Pine Street hotel with more elegance, better pay and, so far, no fentanyl. She said it was good to be away from Hosmer Street, but at first, she felt out of place and had a hard time shaking the thought that anyone she walked past might try to hurt her.</p> <p>“I’m looking like Mortal Kombat. I’ve got my face mask on and I have the blade here, looking just like Jago off Killer Instinct or something,” Wright said in late July, from the lobby of her new apartment, referring to combat video games. “I be like, ‘Round 1, fight,’ you know what I mean? And that’s where my mentality is still stuck, like I’m still at Hosmer.”</p> <p>Now, when Wright goes into work, she’s “just a regular housekeeper,” she says. Her hatchets stay with her but tucked into a purse, ready in case any of Hosmer’s ills follow.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/31 Rents in Tacoma: how high can it go?</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.thenewstribune.com/news/business/article265093904.html">https://www.thenewstribune.com/news/business/article265093904.html</a>
GIST	<p>With the real estate market cooling off, so too has the rate of rent increases, according to three new reports.</p> <p>Apartment List, in its September report, shows Tacoma rents holding steady month-over-month in August. That compares with a 0.5 percent increase nationally.</p> <p>Month-over-month growth in Tacoma “ranks No. 76 among the nation’s 100 largest cities,” the data firm said in a release issued Tuesday.</p> <p>Apartment List says rent growth in Tacoma is 4 percent over last year, compared with 19.8 percent at this time last year.</p> <p>Tacoma’s rate of rent growth is lower than the state average of 8.6 percent, and the national average of 10 percent.</p> <p>However, Tacoma rents are up by 25.6 percent since March 2020, according to the report.</p> <p>“Median rents in Tacoma currently stand at \$1,250 for a 1-bedroom apartment and \$1,596 for a two-bedroom,” it noted.</p> <p>Redmond and Issaquah had the highest median rents in the area for the period, according to the listing and data service, with median two-bedroom rents at \$2,500 and \$2,550, respectively. Redmond had the highest year-over-year growth at 15 percent; Issaquah was at 13.4 percent.</p> <p>Puyallup was more expensive than Tacoma, with median one-bedroom at \$1,460 and two-bedroom at \$1,790, and year-over-year growth of 10.1 percent.</p> <p>Lakewood had the lowest rents for the area, with a two-bedroom median of \$1,459; “rents increased 0.6 percent over the past month and 3.9 percent over the past year,” according to the report.</p> <p>The data service calculates its numbers using median rent statistics from the Census Bureau, then extrapolates them to the current month using a growth rate calculated from its listing data.</p> <p>Rent.com, in its latest report, shows average rents up 8 percent for 2-bedroom apartments in Tacoma from a year ago. Drilling down by neighborhood, it showed the annual change flat in many areas for one-bedrooms year over year. The North End was up 5 percent, while South Tacoma was down 14 percent.</p> <p>For two-bedrooms, the average rent for a unit downtown was up 15 percent from a year ago, but down in most other neighborhoods.</p>

<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	<p>It showed average rents ranging from \$1,485 for studios to \$2,329 for two-bedrooms.</p> <p>Redfin, in an earlier August report, noted a slowdown in rental increases nationwide, with the national median asking rent showing month-over-month growth of just 0.6 percent in July, “the slowest growth since February and down from a 2.1 percent increase a year earlier.”</p> <p>“Big rent hikes may finally be coming to an end as landlords adjust to waning tenant budgets that are being strained by the rising cost of groceries, gas and other regular expenses,” Redfin chief economist Daryl Fairweather said in the update. “Still, rents are increasing faster than overall inflation, which has started to ease.</p> <p>“We expect rental growth to continue to slow, but markets with strong job growth and limited new housing construction, like New York and Seattle, will likely continue to experience large rent increases.”</p> <p>Tacoma is seeing a building boom of apartments, with thousands of new units to be completed in the next few years.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/31 Seattle mayor does damage control</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/politics/seattle-mayor-does-damage-control-after-leaked-criticism-of-homeless-agency-city-council/">https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/politics/seattle-mayor-does-damage-control-after-leaked-criticism-of-homeless-agency-city-council/</a>
GIST	<p>When Bruce Harrell became mayor of Seattle this past winter, he entered office proclaiming a motto of <a href="#">One Seattle</a>.</p> <p>But he apparently strayed from that theme this summer, signaling in a series of meetings with the Seattle Police Department that he will work against “inexperienced” City Council members in next year’s elections, and criticizing the King County Regional Homelessness Authority.</p> <p>In leaked excerpts from the meetings with SPD, originally <a href="#">published by radio station 770 KTTH</a>, Harrell reportedly said the authority was “working against” his efforts to address homelessness in the city, adding that nobody “has a right to sleep on a sidewalk.”</p> <p>At a news conference introducing his proposed \$115 million Seattle Park District budget Wednesday, Harrell vaguely acknowledged the remarks.</p> <p>Harrell said he didn’t know exactly what the KTTH report said, noting that he “can’t keep track of everything” he says, but did not deny the comments. He instead reworded his candid criticisms in more diplomatic language than he used in the semiprivate meetings with SPD.</p> <p>He said Wednesday that he maintains the right to “criticize what he sees” as mayor, noting that he didn’t “cuss anyone out” or name individuals.</p> <p>Harrell also admitted to doing damage control Tuesday after the comments were published, noting he had been “making calls to anyone who might have been affected” by his remarks.</p> <p>Harrell’s meetings with police were part of a <a href="#">series of conversations he committed to having this summer about his expectations around public safety</a>. SPD confirmed Tuesday that Harrell had been talking with officers during roll call, but could not verify when or at which precincts or during which shifts the meetings occurred.</p> <p>Harrell told reporters Wednesday that regional homelessness authority was one tool of many, along with the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion program and efforts by SPD, parks and other city departments working to fight homelessness, adding that he’s not content with the combined efforts.</p>



“We put all those tools together and I’m still not happy with what I’m seeing. And you do not want the mayor who is complacent,” he said Wednesday.

Lisa Dugaard, director of the nonprofit Public Defender Association and who oversees the LEAD program, said she talked to the administration after hearing the comments Harrell is said to have made, and believes their relationship is “in good shape.”

“We’re prioritizing what the city is asking us to, and feeding back our analysis of where the gaps are,” she wrote Wednesday. “Not sure if what was reported was accurate, but it was a good opportunity to check in, and we have a renewed confirmation that we are on the same page about what we should be doing.”

Harrell said Wednesday that Marc Dones, CEO of the homelessness authority, was aware of his opinions.

When asked if he was considering a cut to the authority’s funding, Harrell said that his proposed budget, to be released in September, will recognize “a lot of great work” from the authority.

This summer, [Dones proposed a budget that would nearly double the authority’s funds in its second year](#), adding \$90 million to the \$119 million 2022 budget. Harrell rebuffed the idea even then, doubling down in comments to police.

In 2022, Seattle funded over \$69 million, or about 68% of the regional homeless authority’s budget.

A spokesperson said Dones was unavailable for comment on Tuesday after Dones canceled a previously scheduled session with media. The spokesperson did provide a written statement Tuesday, indirectly addressing Harrell’s remarks.

“The Regional Homelessness Authority was designed as a communitywide effort, working together with all 39 cities, King County, businesses, philanthropy, housed and unhoused neighbors, in order to implement real solutions,” the statement said. “With our partners, we are working to create vibrant, inclusive communities where everyone has a safe and stable place to live, and we can accomplish that goal when we work together.”

Harrell also reportedly told police that “no one has a right to camp out in a park where our children are supposed to play” and that he is “not supposed to see freaking syringes in a park.”

City Councilmember Andrew Lewis noted after the news conference Wednesday that Harrell’s proposed parks budget, which includes \$3.6 million to add 26 park rangers to the city’s current two-person force, would help address these safety concerns.

“They do a service that currently is largely done by the police,” Lewis said, noting the city is working on ways to offer alternative responses to calls that do not need to be handled by police.

“So things are moving along and we expect the budget to reflect the next steps.”

In the original comments to SPD, Harrell also criticized several unnamed members of the council for being “inexperienced,” and he said he was committed to talking to people willing to oppose them in next year’s election. He noted that only three of nine council members supported him during his campaign for mayor.

On Wednesday, Harrell softened his comments, saying he was only being realistic about the council members who are in their first term, and encouraging people who were “getting involved in civic politics.”

“That does not mean they can’t do the work and get the work done, but we have to acknowledge experience and lack thereof,” Harrell said.

Lewis, who is among the first-term members, said that the remarks don’t change his ability to work with Harrell.

“To be clear, I don’t really think there was anything in those comments, which would lead anyone to conclude any actual change between the mayor and council,” Lewis said, adding that Harrell’s skepticism toward council-backed programs doesn’t necessarily mean budget cuts or substantive changes.

“I think everything is still moving forward and I don’t have any concerns about that,” he said of his relationship with the administration.

According to KTTH, Deputy Mayor Monisha Harrell, Harrell’s niece and the former court-appointed monitor of a decade-old U.S. Department of Justice consent decree mandating police reform, said in the SPD meetings that she doesn’t believe the city needs to be under the decree anymore.

The mayor agreed with that remark Wednesday, saying he would tell a federal court that the city “will have compliance with the consent decree” and “will have systems in place to change the culture and change how we use force” when the time came to review the decree.

Harrell also said his administration is undergoing some reorganization, starting with former Director of Public Safety Andrew Myerberg’s recent switch to director of special projects.

The mayor said he had planned a six-month review of the roles of everyone in his office, and it made sense to shift Myerberg to a broader position.

“We started looking at our assets and who has some energy around a certain area and we started moving people around and we will continue to do that. I believe in a learning organization,” Harrell said.

Myerberg’s shift came after Deputy Mayor Greg Wong’s appointment to replace former Deputy Mayor of External Relations Kendee Yamaguchi, who resigned abruptly at the beginning of August.

Harrell said he will fill the public safety director role around the same time as the appointment of a new police chief in September, and will prioritize a replacement who understands “constitutional policing” and is willing to look at what other cities have done successfully.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/31 WA dramatic rise overdose deaths</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/health/what-to-know-on-international-overdose-awareness-day-about-was-dramatic-rise-in-overdose-deaths/">https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/health/what-to-know-on-international-overdose-awareness-day-about-was-dramatic-rise-in-overdose-deaths/</a>
GIST	<p>The number of Washingtonians who died from drug overdoses jumped by 39% from 2019 to 2020, and preliminary data points to another increase in 2021, according to the Washington State Department of Health.</p> <p>The grim upward trend is a national issue exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and stigma surrounding substance use that prevents people from seeking or receiving help, health experts say.</p> <p>“One of the main reasons people die from an overdose is that they’re alone, and there’s no one there to respond to it,” Emalie Huriaux, a DOH programs manager, said ahead of <a href="#">International Overdose Awareness Day</a> on Wednesday.</p> <p>“Our top-line message needs to focus on saving lives because overdose deaths are preventable.”</p>

### **Drug overdoses in Washington and King County**

The state reported 1,259 drug overdose deaths in 2019, which jumped to 1,731 in 2020, according to DOH data.

Preliminary data for 2021 points to a continued increase, indicating 2,264 people died from drug overdoses statewide.

King County overdose deaths also rose, from 401 in 2019 to 471 in 2020. 2021 brought 649 overdose deaths countywide, according to preliminary figures.

Statewide figures for 2022 aren't yet available, but [preliminary data](#) shows there were 236 overdose deaths in King County between January and June.

The increase has largely been driven by synthetic opioids, primarily fentanyl and fentanyl analogs, which are chemically similar to fentanyl, according to DOH spokesperson Emily Fredenberg.

Overdose deaths involving synthetic opioids doubled statewide from 2019 to 2020 and increased by 50% in King County during that time, according to the agency's data.

Deaths caused by psychostimulants across the state increased by 57% between 2020 and 2021, according to DOH data. In King County, such deaths increased by 62%.

There's a lot more fentanyl and opioids in the street supply than there used to be, Huriaux said, and because fentanyl is very potent, the drug is likelier than others to cause overdoses.

### **Number of deaths attributed to drug overdoses involving a synthetic opioid, such as fentanyl:**

#### ***King County***

116 deaths in 2019

176 deaths in 2020

364 deaths in 2021

#### ***Snohomish County***

75 deaths in 2019

127 deaths in 2020

156 deaths in 2021

#### ***Pierce County***

38 deaths in 2019

103 deaths in 2020

181 deaths in 2021

#### ***Washington***

337 deaths in 2019

672 deaths in 2020

1,214 deaths in 2021

### **Number of deaths attributed to drug overdoses involving a psychostimulant:**

#### ***King County***

174 deaths in 2019

199 deaths in 2020

324 deaths in 2021

#### ***Snohomish County***

74 deaths in 2019

88 deaths in 2020

106 deaths in 2021

#### ***Pierce County***

62 deaths in 2019

104 deaths in 2020

185 deaths in 2021

**Washington**

540 deaths in 2019

728 deaths in 2020

1,142 deaths in 2021

The number of overdoses among women increased 28% between 2020 and 2021 while overdoses among men increased 32% in the same time frame, according to DOH data.

Though drug overdoses remain highest among white people, deaths have been increasing across all ethnic groups, most noticeably among American Indian and Alaskan Natives, Black people and Hispanics, according to DOH data.

**Stigma and misconceptions**

The main misconception about substance use is that it's a moral failing or something that should be stigmatized or shamed, Huriaux said.

People often think drug use is a result of a "lack of trying or fortitude" and say those struggling with addiction should simply seek help, Huriaux said. But stigma, social factors and accessibility can prevent people from seeking or getting help.

Moreover, additional factors — like mental health problems and homelessness — make getting to the root causes of the crisis extremely complex, Huriaux said.

"We need to look at how we can address stigma and treat people who use drugs with dignity and respect," signaling support instead of shame, Huriaux said.

**Response and resources**

The DOH works with service programs statewide to provide technical assistance, training and other means of support to those using drugs, Huriaux said.

Community-based prevention initiatives such as syringe services programs connect people to substance use disorder treatment, access to sterile syringes and injection equipment, and needle disposal.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, citing almost three decades of research, said such programs are safe and effective, and don't increase illegal drug use or crime. Such programs have also helped reduce the transmission of viral hepatitis, HIV and other infections.

Those programs work directly with people at risk of overdosing or witnessing an overdose, Huriaux said, so they give out naloxone, a federally approved medication that works to rapidly reverse opioid overdoses.

Huriaux's DOH program buys naloxone for local health jurisdictions, treatment programs, homeless shelters, syringe services programs and community partners working directly with people who would benefit from having access to the medication, she said.

Communities can help alleviate the rising number of drug overdose deaths by providing education on overdoses and having naloxone on hand, Huriaux said. They can also help by scaling access to evidence-based drug treatment, syringe services programs and other low-barrier programs that prioritize the wellness of people who use drugs and help connect them to services.

"At the individual level, we can all save a life if we witness an overdose by carrying at least two doses of naloxone," she said.

Washington has a [standing order](#) that allows pharmacists to dispense naloxone to anyone at risk of experiencing an opioid-related overdose or in a position to help anyone at risk of an overdose.

	The DOH outlines steps to prevent overdoses <a href="#">here</a> . Other resources can be viewed on <a href="#">King County's website</a> and on <a href="#">stopoverdose.org</a> .
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HEADLINE	<b>08/31 New omicron-specific Covid boosters in WA</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/health/what-wa-needs-to-know-about-the-new-omicron-specific-covid-boosters/">https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/health/what-wa-needs-to-know-about-the-new-omicron-specific-covid-boosters/</a>
GIST	<p>While <a href="#">many Americans say they've resumed life as if COVID-19 were in the rearview mirror</a>, people are still dying, different variants of the coronavirus continue to emerge and the way officials are trying to grapple with the disease is evolving.</p> <p>On Wednesday, the U.S. authorized its first update to COVID-19 vaccine booster doses that target the most common omicron variant. Shots could begin within days.</p> <p>Here's what you need to know about the new booster shots.</p> <p><b>What's different about these shots?</b></p> <p>The formula for the modified boosters is a tweak on the recipe of the original mRNA shots made by Pfizer and rival Moderna. They contain <a href="#">half the original vaccine recipe and half protection against the newest omicron versions</a>, called BA.4 and BA.5, that are considered the most contagious yet.</p> <p><b>Who should get the new booster?</b></p> <p>An advisory panel for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will debate Thursday and is expected to issue suggestions on who should get the new booster, including whether people at high risk for COVID-19 should go first.</p> <p>If <a href="#">past booster recommendations are any indication</a>, the agency could ultimately recommend people who are most vulnerable to severe disease, including people 65 and older and those near 50 with multiple health problems, have first access to the boosters.</p> <p>However, there's some indication they will be more widely recommended.</p> <p>"As we head into fall and begin to spend more time indoors, we strongly encourage anyone who is eligible to consider receiving a booster dose with a bivalent COVID-19 vaccine to provide better protection against currently circulating variants," U.S. Food and Drug Administration Commissioner Dr. Robert Califf said in a statement.</p> <p><b>When will these new boosters be available locally?</b></p> <p>The soonest they could be available in the Seattle area would be the weekend of Sept. 9, <a href="#">according to Public Health – Seattle &amp; King County</a>.</p> <p>"The very earliest we could expect to have the new booster doses available at our vaccination sites at the Auburn Outlet Collection Mall would be the weekend of September 9th," the public health agency said in a blog post. "However, delays in shipping are possible, so it could be later."</p> <p><b>Will Americans have to pay for their boosters moving forward?</b></p> <p>The U.S. government anticipates that without additional funds from Congress, it will have to <a href="#">stop purchasing and providing free COVID-19 shots to Americans</a> as early as January.</p> <p>That means people would have to obtain shots through insurers or pay for them out-of-pocket as they do with most other vaccines, including seasonal flu shots. Pfizer and Moderna have charged the U.S. government between \$15 and \$30 per dose, depending on the size of the supply contract. <a href="#">Moderna has previously indicated it would charge between \$32 and \$37</a> per dose for its vaccine.</p> <p><b>But what about Washingtonians?</b></p>

Gubernatorial spokesperson Mike Faulk said Gov. Jay Inslee's office is working with relevant agencies to determine what actions the state may need to take to ensure continued vaccine access, both primary series and boosters, for uninsured or underinsured Washingtonians. Those with private insurance or Apple Health coverage will continue to have access to vaccines with no cost-sharing, Faulk said in an email.

#### **Did the federal government end its distribution of free at-home coronavirus tests?**

The federal government [said this week](#) that due to a lack of funding, people will no longer be able to order [free at-home coronavirus tests on its site](#) after Friday.

#### **Can we still get free at-home tests in Washington?**

Yes. Free at-home tests are still available through the Washington State Department of Health [website](#). Spokesperson Raechel Sims said the agency had been receiving orders of about 2,000-4,000 per day. But that number swelled to 17,000-20,000 daily after the federal government announced it would no longer distribute the tests for free.

#### **How long are the free tests expected to be available in our state?**

There's still plenty of inventory to meet the state's at-home testing demands, Sims said, noting that officials have no plan to end or change the program.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/31 New Covid boosters target newest variants</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/business/us-clears-updated-covid-boosters-targeting-newest-variants/">https://www.seattletimes.com/business/us-clears-updated-covid-boosters-targeting-newest-variants/</a>
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. on Wednesday authorized its first update to COVID-19 vaccines, booster doses that target today's most common omicron strain. Shots could begin within days.</p> <p>The move by the Food and Drug Administration tweaks the recipe of shots made by Pfizer and rival Moderna that already have saved millions of lives. The hope is that the modified boosters will blunt yet another winter surge — and help tamp down the BA.5 omicron relative that continues to spread widely.</p> <p>“These updated boosters present us with an opportunity to get ahead” of the next COVID-19 wave, said FDA Commissioner Dr. Robert Califf.</p> <p>Until now, COVID-19 vaccines have targeted the original coronavirus strain, even as wildly different mutants emerged. The new U.S. boosters are combination, or “bivalent,” shots. They contain half that original vaccine recipe and half protection against the newest omicron versions, BA.4 and BA.5, that are considered the most contagious yet.</p> <p>The combination aims to increase cross-protection against multiple variants.</p> <p>“It really provides the broadest opportunity for protection,” Pfizer vaccine chief Annaliesa Anderson told The Associated Press.</p> <p>The updated boosters are only for people who have already had their primary vaccinations, using the original vaccines. Doses made by Pfizer and its partner BioNTech are for anyone 12 and older while Moderna's updated shots are for adults — if it has been at least two months since their last primary vaccination or their latest booster. They're not to be used for initial vaccinations.</p> <p>There's one more step before a fall booster campaign begins: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention must recommend who should get the additional shot. An influential CDC advisory panel will debate the evidence Thursday — including whether people at high risk from COVID-19 should go first.</p> <p>The U.S. has purchased more than 170 million doses from the two companies. Pfizer said it could ship up to 15 million of those doses by the end of next week. Moderna didn't immediately say how many doses are ready to ship but that some will be available “in the coming days.”</p>



The big question is whether people weary of vaccinations will roll up their sleeves again. Just half of vaccinated Americans got the first recommended booster dose, and only a third of those 50 and older who were urged to get a second booster did so.

Here's the rub: The original vaccines still offer strong protection against severe disease and death from COVID-19 for generally healthy people, especially if they got that important first booster dose. It's not clear just how much more benefit an updated booster will bring — beyond a temporary jump in antibodies capable of fending off an omicron infection.

Still, “people have to realize this is a different kind of booster than was previously available. It will work better at protecting against omicron,” said virologist Andrew Pekosz of the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

Even people who had an earlier omicron version still can get reinfected so “you should definitely go for the booster even if you’ve been infected in the last year,” added Pekosz. He thinks “if we can get good buy-in to use this, we might really be able to make a dent” in COVID-19 cases.

The FDA cleared the modifications ahead of studies in people, a step toward eventually handling COVID-19 vaccine updates more like yearly changes to flu shots.

FDA vaccine chief Dr. Peter Marks stressed the agency considered “the totality” of evidence. Pfizer and Moderna have previously brewed vaccine doses updated to match earlier mutants — including the omicron strain named BA.1 that struck last winter — and tested them in people. Those earlier recipe changes were safe, and the BA.1 version substantially boosted virus-fighting antibodies — more than another dose of the original vaccine — although fewer that recognized today’s genetically distinct BA.4 and BA.5 strains.

But instead of using those BA.1 shots, FDA ordered the companies to brew even more up-to-date doses that target those newest omicron mutants, sparking a race to roll them out. Rather than waiting a few more months for additional human studies of that very similar recipe tweak, Marks said animal tests showed the latest update spurs “a very good immune response.”

“One needs to refresh the immune system with what is actually circulating,” Marks said. That’s why FDA also is no longer authorizing boosters made with the original recipe for those 12 and older.

The hope, Marks said, is that a vaccine matched to currently spreading variants might do a better job fighting infection, not just serious illness, at least for a while.

What’s next? Even as modified shots roll out, Moderna and Pfizer are conducting human studies to help assess their value, including how they hold up if a new mutant comes along.

And for children, Pfizer plans to ask FDA to allow updated boosters for 5- to 11-year-olds in early October.

It’s the first U.S. update to the COVID-19 vaccine recipe, an important but expected next step — like how flu vaccines get updated every year.

And the U.S. isn’t alone. Britain recently decided to offer adults over 50 a different booster option from Moderna, a combo shot targeting that initial BA.1 omicron strain. European regulators are considering whether to authorize one or both of the updated formulas.

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HEADLINE	08/31 Washington State Fair starts Friday
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.king5.com/article/entertainment/events/guide-2022-washington-state-fair/281-cf053f4b-ca73-4ff2-8865-cec9497d7056">https://www.king5.com/article/entertainment/events/guide-2022-washington-state-fair/281-cf053f4b-ca73-4ff2-8865-cec9497d7056</a>



PUYALLUP, Wash. — Funnel cakes, Ferris wheels and family-friendly fun are just days away. Here is a complete guide for what to do, what to eat and where to park at the 2022 [Washington State Fair](#).

This year, there will be new food and beverage vendors, exhibits and concerts.

The fair opens on Sept. 2 and runs through Sept. 25. The fair is closed on all Tuesdays within that date range, it's also closed on Wednesday, Sept. 7.

### **How to get discounted (or free) admission**

All tickets are \$1 cheaper if purchased online, as opposed to at the gate. Tickets for kids under 5 years old are free.

Weekday prices at the gate are \$15 for adults and \$13 for children (6-12 years old) and seniors (over 65 years old). Weekend prices at the gate are \$18 for adults and \$15 for children and seniors.

These are the free entrance days:

- Friday, Sept. 2: Admission is free for everyone between 10:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.
- Sept. 2-5: All kids ages 18 and younger can get in for free all weekend
- Mondays: Every Monday all active, reserve and retired military and their dependents can enter for free
- Friday, Sept. 9: Admission is free for everyone between 10:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.

### **Concerts and performances**

All music and comedy performances will be held at the Grandstand, located at the north end of the facility. The closest parking lots to access the Grandstand are the gold and red lots. Concert tickets include same-day gate admission.

Here is the full list of performances. To buy tickets, [click here](#).

- Sept. 2 at 7:30 p.m.: Ann Wilson of Heart with Night Ranger
- Sept. 3 at 7:30 p.m.: Blake Shelton with Wade Hayes
- Sept. 4 at 7:30 p.m.: Nelly with Breland
- Sept. 5 at 6 p.m.: The Beach Boys
- Sept. 8 at 9:15 p.m.: Josh Turner (Dancin' in the Dirt Party)
- Sept. 9 at 9:15 p.m.: Matt Stell (Dancin' in the Dirt Party)
- Sept. 10 at 9:15 p.m.: The Cadillac Three (Dancin' in the Dirt Party)
- Sept. 12 at 9:15 p.m.: Russell Dickerson and Niko Moon (Dancin' in the Dirt Party)
- Sept. 14 at 6:30 p.m.: Kidz Bop
- Sept. 15 at 7:30 p.m.: Dierks Bentley
- Sept. 16 at 7:30 p.m.: Sam Hunt with Travis Denning
- Sept. 17 at 7:30 p.m.: Lindsey Sterling
- Sept. 18 at 1 p.m.: Fiestas Patrias
- Sept. 19 at 7:30 p.m.: Lecrae with Tauren Wells
- Sept. 21 at 7:30 p.m.: Maxwell with Joe
- Sept. 22 at 7:30 p.m.: Shaggy with TLC
- Sept. 23 at 7:30 p.m.: The Doobie Brothers with Michael McDonald
- Sept. 24 at 7:30 p.m.: Whose Line is it Anyway with Drew Carey
- Sept. 25 at 7:30 p.m.: Lynyrd Skynyrd with Aaron Crawford

### **New this year**

There will be new food and beverage vendors, exhibits and performances for all ages.

The [Biggest Little Livestock Show](#) will feature miniature animals. It runs Sept. 2-5 and is free to the public.

A new [dinosaur exhibition](#) celebrates the hunt for fossils and features large-scale, animatronic dinosaurs and interactive displays. Tickets to the exhibit are \$9.

A [cattle education exhibit](#) will answer everyone's burning cow questions and showcase a variety of cow breeds. It will run Sept. 21-25 and is free.

There are also many new performers, snack options and themed dance parties.

### **Food and drink**

There appears to be a food and beverage vendor to accommodate all tastes and dietary restrictions at the fair. Those who want to keep it classic will be able to find corn dogs and elephant ears, but that's not the only option.

There will be vendors that provide Hawaiian, Mediterranean and Mexican cuisine.

[Big Island Poke](#) is a new addition to the fair and will accommodate those looking for fresh fish and poke bowls. [Raspados Del Sur](#) is also new and will be serving up fresh fruit cups and desserts.

The [fair's website also has a guide](#) for those with food allergies. Those who are looking for dairy-free, gluten-free, peanut-free, vegan or vegetarian options will be able to find food at the fair.

To see the full list of vendors, [click here](#).

### **Rodeo information**

The Puyallup Rodeo will be held Sept. 8-11. The rodeo features events like bull riding, bareback riding, barrel racing and more. For a full list of events and ticket information, [click here](#).

The Western Rodeo Parade & Cattle Drive is a way to get the whole family excited for the rodeo. It's free to the public and will be held on Sept. 9 at 10 a.m.

It travels down Meridian Street in downtown Puyallup.

All rodeo events will be held at the Grandstand, located at the north end of the fairgrounds. Any rodeo tickets include same-day gate admission.

### **Parking**

Parking at the fair on weekdays costs \$12 and on weekends it costs \$18. The official fair lots are sponsored by O'Reilly Auto Parts. To save \$3 on weekday parking, purchase parking passes at local O'Reilly Auto Parts locations.

### **Health and safety**

The fair will not require masks or proof of vaccination.

There will be security screenings at all entrances to the fairgrounds and performances at the Grandstand. Security screening includes metal detectors and bag searches. Weapons of any kind are prohibited.

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HEADLINE	08/31 Free youth transit pass begins
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/free-youth-transit-pass-king-county/281-bd8512b9-6151-426c-a1f7-101376b99b2d">https://www.king5.com/article/news/local/free-youth-transit-pass-king-county/281-bd8512b9-6151-426c-a1f7-101376b99b2d</a>
GIST	<p>SEATTLE — Those 18 and younger will finally be able to catch a free transit ride in multiple Puget Sound communities beginning Sept. 1, thanks to the <a href="#">Free Youth Transit Pass</a>.</p> <p>Beginning Thursday, young riders can use their blue youth and student ORCA cards, show their student identification or simply board and ride free, according to King County Metro.</p>

	<p>Of the 329,000 students enrolled in public and private K-12 schools in King County, only around 25,000 students had access to subsidized ORCA cards during the school year, according to King County Executive Dow Constantine's office. King, Snohomish, Pierce and Kitsap counties have an estimated 645,000 youth population aged 6-18.</p> <p>"Free Youth Transit Pass is a generational pivot that builds a more equitable and sustainable future for our youth while connecting them to opportunity and providing needed financial help for families," said Constantine.</p> <p>The transit agencies accepting the Free Youth Transit Pass beginning Thursday include King County Metro, King County Water Taxi, Pierce Transit, Sound Transit, Community Transit, Kitsap Ferries, Kitsap Transit and Skagit Transit.</p> <p>Washington State Ferries will begin accepting the Free Youth Transit Pass on Oct. 1, excluding vehicles.</p> <p>The Free Youth Transit Pass is made possible by funding from the state's <a href="#">Move Ahead Washington</a> transportation package, which was signed into law earlier this year.</p> <p>King County Metro is expected to receive an estimated \$31.7 million in grant funding to implement the Free Youth Transit Pass. King County said the funding exceeds the estimated \$10 million in annual fare revenue from those under 19.</p>
<a href="#">Return to Top</a>	<i>More information can be found at <a href="https://freeyouthtransitpass.com">freeyouthtransitpass.com</a>.</i>

HEADLINE	<b>09/01 Error: EAS notice to evacuate Los Angeles</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.foxnews.com/us/emergency-alert-telling-all-la-eastern-north-pacific-ocean-evacuate-sent-error-authorities">https://www.foxnews.com/us/emergency-alert-telling-all-la-eastern-north-pacific-ocean-evacuate-sent-error-authorities</a>
GIST	<p>An immediate evacuation notice from the Emergency Alert System that interrupted regular TV programming in the <a href="#">Los Angeles area</a> Wednesday, telling the entirety of L.A. County and the "Eastern North Pacific Ocean" area to evacuate due to a fire was sent in "error" by Los Angeles County, the Ventura County Sheriff said.</p> <p>However, the L.A. County's Office of Emergency Management told Fox News Digital the message was "properly formatted" and should not have "triggered an EAS evacuation" but it didn't have an immediate answer for the "root causes" of the incident.</p> <p>The erroneous alert, which repeated "Eastern North Pacific" a dozen times, said, "A civil authority has issued an IMMEDIATE EVACUATION NOTICE for the following counties or areas: Eastern North Pacific Ocean; Eastern North Pacific Ocean; Port Conception to Guadalupe Island, Eastern North Pacific; Los Angeles, CA; Eastern North Pacific Ocean; Eastern North Pacific Ocean; Eastern North Pacific Ocean; Eastern North Pacific Ocean; Eastern North Pacific Ocean; Eastern North Pacific Ocean; Eastern North Pacific Ocean; Eastern North Pacific Ocean; at 5:08 PM on AUG 31, 2022 Effective until 8:08 PM."</p> <p>The Office of Emergency Management said in a statement to Fox News Digital: "The National Weather Service (NWS) Los Angeles/Oxnard transmitted a Non-Weather Emergency Message (NWEM) via National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administrator (NOAA) Weather Radio on behalf of the County of Los Angeles per the request of Los Angeles County Fire officials to support Evacuation notifications related to the Route Fire, a brush fire in the Castaic area."</p> <p>The agency said the alert was "properly formatted for dissemination via Weather radio" in the target area through "close coordination" between the county and NWS and "worked as advertised."</p> <p>It added that it had confirmed with NWS Los Angeles that the alert was "correctly configured and should not have triggered" an Emergency Alert System evacuation.</p>

The statement further said, "We cannot comment on broadcaster configuration of EAS receivers and welcome further engagement with local broadcasters and Los Angeles County FCC Local Emergency Communications Committee to find root causes of this incident."

Soon after the alert went out, the Ventura County Sheriff tweeted: "The evacuation notice that was received by some Ventura County Residents on television was sent in error by the County of Los Angeles. There is no threat to Ventura County at this time and no need for residents to evacuate."

The alert was connected to the Route Fire in [Castaic, California](#), in northwestern Los Angeles County, which quickly grew to more than 4,000 acres by Wednesday evening amid triple-digit temperatures and forced legitimate mandatory evacuations in the area.

The Los Angeles County Office of Emergency Management said on social media Wednesday afternoon that mandatory evacuations were in effect: "Paradise Ranch Estates Mobile Park, to include: Paradise Estates and all structures south of Templin Highway along Upper Ridge Route Rd, are advised to evacuate north towards Gorman."

The Santa Clarita County Sheriff also tweeted at 6:30 p.m. PT that evacuations were in effect for "NORTH OF LAKE HUGHES ROAD SOUTH OF TEMPLIN HIGHWAY (includes Paradise Ranch Mobile Estates) EAST OF 5 FWY WEST OF CASTAIC LAGOON."

The Interstate 5 freeway was shut down in the area as the [fire spread](#). The TV alert left people on social media concerned. "wtf did anyone else just see this on their cable teevee?" one person tweeted, adding, "an 'immediate evacuation notice' for the entire city of Los Angeles??? And the 'Eastern North Pacific Ocean?' Somebody f---ed up somewhere."

Another person said it reminded them of the 2018 incident in which the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency sent out a false alert to cell phones in the state that said: "BALLISTIC MISSILE THREAT INBOUND TO HAWAII. SEEK IMMEDIATE SHELTER. THIS IS NOT A DRILL."

The agency later said it was a human error that happened when an employee hit "live alert" rather than "test alert" during a readiness test.

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HEADLINE	09/01 Iraq 'failed state' like Afghanistan?
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.cbsnews.com/news/iraq-protests-deaths-al-sadr-iran-fears-of-failed-state-like-afghanistan/">https://www.cbsnews.com/news/iraq-protests-deaths-al-sadr-iran-fears-of-failed-state-like-afghanistan/</a>
GIST	<p>Violent <a href="#">clashes between rival factions</a> within Iraq's majority Shiite Muslim community left 23 people dead and hundreds more wounded this week. The mayhem ended abruptly when powerful Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr ordered his followers to withdraw from locations they'd occupied in Baghdad and elsewhere, and to go home.</p> <p>But while al-Sadr's command defused the deadly standoff between his backers and rival Shiite factions <a href="#">considered allies, if not proxies, of neighboring Iran</a>, the underlying rift remains. Iraqis know that if it's not mended, the violence could easily erupt again, and escalate into a wider conflict.</p> <p>"It was a terrifying 24 hours, we could hear bullets hitting walls and cars around our apartment," Ahmad Abdullah told CBS News. Abdulla, 36, lives with his wife and two daughters less than a mile from the heavily fortified "Green Zone" in Baghdad, where much of the government is based and which is often the focal point of unrest.</p> <p>He compared the situation to the civil war that tore Iraq apart between 2003, when the U.S. invaded to topple Saddam Hussein, and 2008.</p> <p><b>Why did it happen?</b></p>

The clashes didn't take many Iraqis by surprise. The country has been mired in political turbulence since the last national elections in October 2021.

Al-Sadr's nationalist political movement, which opposes both Iran's and the West's influence in Iraq, won the most parliamentary seats in the voting, securing 73 of the total 329.

But they fell short of the two-thirds majority of seats required to form a new government unilaterally. Al-Sadr and his senior aides refused to negotiate a power-sharing unity government with the rival "Coordination Framework," an alliance of mostly Iran-aligned Shiite parties.

Al-Sadr dismissed the Framework's politicians as corrupt proxies of Iran. But without cooperation from its factions — including the State of Law parliamentary bloc led by two-term [former Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki](#) — al-Sadr couldn't form a new government.

Iraq has been run by a "caretaker government" since 2020, even before the elections last year failed to establish a new administration.

Al-Sadr tried many times to form a government, but with the deadlock persisting, in June he told all 73 of his bloc's Members of Parliament to resign in protest. He gave his supporters a green light to occupy the parliament and block the next session of the legislature, and then said the parliament should be dissolved and new elections held.

On Monday, al-Sadr went a step further and announced his resignation from politics — not for the first time. His followers took it as a battle cry, marching from the parliament they'd occupied for days toward other governmental buildings, including a presidential palace that hosts meetings for heads of state and foreign dignitaries.

They kept marching toward houses and offices of al-Sadr's rivals, and that's when it got ugly. Militias the al-Sadrists say are backed by Iran started confronting them. It escalated quickly, and soon small arms, drones and even mortars were fired.

The chaotic scenes were reminiscent of Iraq's civil war and the sectarian violence that followed the U.S. invasion in 2003. It intensified when the al-Sadr movement's military wing joined his supporters in the melee.

By the time the cleric told his backers to go home, almost two dozen people were dead in Baghdad and other Shiite-majority cities in southern Iraq.

### **Who's Muqtada al-Sadr?**

Al-Sadr has long been one of Iraq's most influential Shiite clerics, as was his late father, from whom he inherited a large following.

Unlike many other Shiite leaders in the country, al-Sadr opposed the U.S. invasion in 2003 from the very first day. Soon after U.S. troops arrived, he declared war on them, and it was his militia that claimed many of the U.S. lives lost during the conflict.

Many Iraqis saw al-Sadr as a commander doing what their national leaders would not — standing up to a foreign invader — and the war gave his domestic popularity and nationalistic image a huge boost.

By 2007, al-Sadr was seen as a serious threat to the U.S. military and the Iraqi administration it backed. So, the U.S. helped usher Nouri al-Maliki into the presidency, vowing to help him take on al-Sadr and his militia.

It was the birth of the enmity between two of Iraq's most powerful Shiite leaders.

### **Prospects for peace, or war**

	<p>Al-Maliki and his Al-Dawa Party remain the second most powerful Shiite faction in Iraq, after al-Sadr's.</p> <p>An audio clip of al-Maliki speaking, which was leaked recently to Iraqi media, confirms that he has connections with Iran's powerful Revolutionary Guard, which will only bolster the contempt for him among al-Sadr's loyal supporters.</p> <p>CBS News spoke with many Iraqi politicians who suggested that the division within the country's huge Shiite population — between the al-Sadrists and al-Maliki's supporters — has now reached a point of no return.</p> <p>If they can't agree to work together for the greater good of the country, few see much reason to hope for a stable government in the near future.</p> <p>"It might look like the two groups are fighting for their election rights and constitutional deadlines, but make no mistake, neither one of them care about democracy and laws," political analyst Rostam Mahmood told CBS News.</p> <p>Sources told CBS News on Wednesday that Iraq's Supreme Court would consider the al-Sadr movement's request to formally dissolve the parliament and order new elections, indicating at least some effort to ease the tension that sparked this week's violence.</p> <p>But Mahmood wasn't optimistic about a lasting solution.</p> <p>"Post-invasion Iraq is now run by groups and leaders that believe in completely different values than a democratic society," Mahmood said. "The idea of parachuting democracy into Iraq didn't work. Just like Afghanistan, Iraq is another failed state, and the country will fall into the wrong hands in the end."</p>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>08/31 Deadly bird flu returns to Midwest</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/deadly-bird-flu-returns-midwest-earlier-expected-89110342">https://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/deadly-bird-flu-returns-midwest-earlier-expected-89110342</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>MINNEAPOLIS -- Bird flu has returned to the Midwest earlier than authorities expected after a lull of several months, with the highly pathogenic disease being detected in two commercial turkey flocks in western Minnesota and a hobby flock in Indiana, officials said Wednesday.</p> <p>The disease was detected after a farm in Meeker County reported an increase in mortality last weekend, the Minnesota Board of Animal Health said. The flock was euthanized to stop the spread. The board later reported that a second flock in the county tested positive Tuesday evening.</p> <p>They were the first detections of avian influenza in Minnesota since May 31, when a backyard flock was struck in Becker County. Indiana's case was its first since a backyard flock there tested positive June 8, which had been the last detection in the Midwest before this week.</p> <p>However, there have been several detections in western states in July and August, including California, where a half-dozen commercial farms have had to kill more than 425,000 chickens and turkeys since last week. There have also been cases in Washington, Oregon and Utah, plus a few in some eastern states.</p> <p>"While the timing of this detection is a bit sooner than we anticipated, we have been preparing for a resurgence of the avian influenza we dealt with this spring," said Dr. Shauna Voss, the board's senior veterinarian. "HPAI is here and biosecurity is the first line of defense to protect your birds."</p> <p>The Indiana State Board of Animal Health reported that a small hobby flock of chickens, ducks and geese in northern Indiana's Elkhart County tested presumptively positive on Tuesday, though final confirmation from a federal lab was pending.</p>



	<p>Across the country, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, 414 flocks in 39 states have been affected since February, costing producers over 40 million birds, mostly commercial turkeys and chickens. The disease has struck 81 Minnesota flocks this year, requiring the killing of nearly 2.7 million birds.</p> <p>Minnesota produces more turkeys annually than any other state.</p> <p>This year's outbreak contributed to a spike in egg and meat prices, and killed an alarming number of bald eagles and other wild birds. It also affected some zoos. It appeared to be waning in June, but officials warned then that another surge could take hold this fall.</p> <p>The disease is typically carried by migrating birds. It only occasionally affects humans, such as farm workers, and the USDA keeps poultry from infected flocks out of the food supply. A widespread outbreak in 2015 killed 50 million birds across 15 states and cost the federal government nearly \$1 billion.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>09/01 NKorea workers to Russia held areas?</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/korea-send-workers-russian-occupied-east-ukraine-89146138">https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/korea-send-workers-russian-occupied-east-ukraine-89146138</a>
GIST	<p>SEOUL, South Korea -- As the war in Ukraine stretches into its seventh month, North Korea is hinting at its interest in sending construction workers to help rebuild Russian-occupied territories in the country's east.</p> <p>The idea is openly endorsed by senior Russian officials and diplomats, who foresee a cheap and hard-working workforce that could be thrown into the "most arduous conditions," a term Russia's ambassador to North Korea used in a recent interview.</p> <p>North Korea's ambassador to Moscow recently met with envoys from two Russia-backed separatist territories in the Donbas region of Ukraine and expressed optimism about cooperation in the "field of labor migration," citing his country's easing pandemic border controls.</p> <p>The talks came after North Korea in July became the only nation aside from Russia and Syria to recognize the independence of the territories, Donetsk and Luhansk, further aligning with Russia over the conflict in Ukraine.</p> <p>The employment of North Korean workers in Donbas would clearly run afoul of U.N. Security Council sanctions imposed on the North over its nuclear and missile programs and further complicate the U.S.-led international push for its nuclear disarmament.</p> <p>Many experts doubt North Korea will send workers while the war remains in flux, with a steady flow of Western weapons helping Ukraine to push back against much larger Russian forces.</p> <p>But they say it's highly likely North Korea will supply labor to Donbas when the fighting eases to boost its own economy, broken by years of U.S.-led sanctions, pandemic border closures and decades of mismanagement.</p> <p>The labor exports would also contribute to a longer-term North Korean strategy of strengthening cooperation with Russia and China, another ideological ally, in an emerging partnership aimed at reducing U.S. influence in Asia.</p> <p>Russian Deputy Prime Minister Marat Khusnullin has said that North Korean construction companies have already offered to help rebuild war-torn areas in Donbas, and that North Korean workers would be welcomed if they come.</p> <p>That's a clear break from Russia's position in December 2017, when it backed new U.N. Security Council sanctions, imposed on North Korea for testing an intercontinental ballistic missile, requiring member states to expel all North Korean workers from their territories within 24 months.</p>



Russia now seems eager to undercut those sanctions as it faces a U.S.-led pressure campaign aimed at isolating its economy over its aggression in Ukraine, said Lim Soo-ho, a senior analyst at the Institute for National Security Strategy, a think tank run by South Korea's spy agency.

"For Russia, the idea of employing North Korean workers for postwar rebuilding has real merit," Lim said. "Large numbers of North Korean construction workers came to Russia in previous years, and demand for their labor was strong because they were cheap and known for quality work."

Before the 2017 sanctions, labor exports were a rare legitimate source of foreign currency for North Korea, bringing hundreds of millions of dollars a year to the government.

The U.S. State Department earlier estimated that about 100,000 North Koreans were working overseas in government-arranged jobs, primarily in Russia and China, but also in Africa, the Middle East, Europe and South Asia.

Civilian experts say the workers earned \$200 million to \$500 million a year for North Korea's government while pocketing only a fraction of their salaries, often toiling for more than 12 hours a day under constant surveillance by their country's security agents.

While Russia sent home some North Korean workers before the U.N. deadline in December 2019, an uncertain number remained, continuing to work or becoming stuck after the North sealed its borders to fend off COVID-19.

North Korea could easily mobilize possibly several hundreds or even thousands of workers to Donbas if it decides to use the laborers who remained in Russia, said Kang Dong Wan, a North Korea expert at South Korea's Dong-A University.

It's not yet clear how lucrative Donbas would be for North Korea.

Russia is short of cash, battered by Western sanctions targeting its financial institutions and a broad swath of industries. North Korea likely has no interest in being paid in rubles because of worries about the currency's purchasing power, which bottomed out during the war's early days before Moscow took steps to artificially restore its value.

North Korea might be willing to be compensated with food, fuel and machinery, an exchange that would likely also violate Security Council sanctions, Lim said.

Hong Min, a senior analyst at South Korea's Institute for National Unification, said North Korea could have bigger things in mind than short-term gains from labor exports.

"The United States' strategic competition with China and confrontation with Russia have given North Korea breathing room as it steps up to join Moscow and Beijing in a united front to counter U.S. influence and promote a multipolar international system," Hong said.

North Korea has already used the war in Ukraine to ramp up its weapons development, exploiting divisions in the Security Council, where Russia and China in May vetoed a U.S.-backed resolution to tighten sanctions on North Korea over its revived ICBM testing this year.

North Korea and Russia also see eye-to-eye on key policies.

North Korea has repeatedly blamed the United States for the Ukraine crisis, saying the West's "hegemonic policy" justifies military actions by Russia in Ukraine to protect itself.

Russia, meanwhile, has repeatedly condemned the revival of large-scale military exercises between the U.S. and South Korea this year, accusing the allies of provoking North Korea and aggravating tensions.

Alexander Matsegora, Russia's ambassador to North Korea, has backed its dubious assertion that its COVID-19 outbreak was caused by South Korean activists who flew anti-North Korean leaflets and other materials across the border with balloons.

Nam Sung-wook, a professor at the unification and diplomacy department of South Korea's Korea University, is one of the few experts who sees the labor exports beginning soon.

Desperate to address its economic woes, North Korea might send small groups of workers to Donbas on "scouting missions" over the next few months and gradually increase the numbers depending on how the war goes, he said.

"Interests are aligning between Pyongyang and Moscow," Nam said. "One hundred or 200 workers could eventually become 10,000."

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HEADLINE	<b>08/31 Lawsuit: Navy 'harbored toxic secrets'</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/US/hawaii-residents-call-navy-address-jet-fuel-water/story?id=89045641">https://abcnews.go.com/US/hawaii-residents-call-navy-address-jet-fuel-water/story?id=89045641</a>
GIST	<p>A lawsuit alleges the Navy "harbored toxic secrets" after jet fuel leaked from a storage facility in Hawaii operated by the Navy, contaminating locals' drinking water and sickening hundreds of families.</p> <p>"You've got American citizens being poisoned by an American asset on American soil," Army Major Amanda Feindt, whose family is suing, told ABC News.</p> <p>In November 2021, health officials and the Navy ordered residents of Pearl Harbor and the surrounding area to stop using tap water after dangerous levels of petroleum products were found in the Navy's Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam water system. The source was pinpointed back to the jet fuel leak from the nearby Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility.</p> <p>Hundreds of families reported petroleum odors coming from residential tap water supplied by the Navy water system, alongside reports of health issues caused by the contaminated drinking water.</p> <p>The DOH had received almost 500 complaints of fuel or gasoline-like odor from people who receive water from the Navy water system.</p> <p>Numerous families allege that they're still battling long-term, chronic health issues in the lawsuit. A PGA golf professional says he has had five surgeries since and continues to battle internal bleeding. One family said it has been plagued with abdominal pain, vomiting, memory loss, skin rashes, brain fog, eye irritation, seizures, and teeth and gum issues, all according to the lawsuit.</p> <p>According to the <a href="#">Environmental Protection Agency</a>, many people remain in temporary housing due to the drinking water crisis. Healani Sonoda-Pale, a Hawaii sovereignty activist, says many are still afraid to drink the water.</p> <p>Activists are calling on the Navy to take action almost a year after the Hawaii Department of Health issued an emergency order against the military agency to <a href="#">address the closure and defueling of the Red Hill facility</a>.</p> <p>"If the Navy has committed to closing the facility, they need to move with the sense of urgency we as the Kanaka Maoli, native people of Hawai'i, feel they must," said resident and protester Keoni DeFranco in an interview with ABC News. "We have no other home," DeFranco added.</p> <p>"Thousands of O'ahu residents, most especially those still relying on the Navy water system, are still depending on bottled water for their daily needs," Sonoda-Pale told ABC News. "The employees at the</p>

schools directly affected by the last leak are still cautious about their drinking water ... even though the Board of Water Supply has said it is drinkable."

Investigations by the [U.S. Pacific Fleet](#) found that the water contamination was a result of the Navy's "ineffective immediate responses" to the fuel releases at Red Hill. It listed the Navy's failures in resolving "deficiencies in the system design and construction, system knowledge and incident response training."

It also said the agency failed to "learn from prior incidents that falls unacceptably short of Navy standards." The facility leaked 27,000 gallons of fuel from a single tank in January 2014, according to [environmental group Sierra Club of Hawaii](#).

The DOH ordered the Navy to immediately install a drinking water treatment system at the Red Hill Shaft and submit a work plan to assess system integrity. Within 30 days of completing the correction action, the Navy must then defuel the underground storage tanks there.

The EPA partnered with the Navy, Army and the Hawaii Department of Health to restore safe drinking water conditions to the affected residents and workers. The agency say they completed drinking water restoration in March 2022.

The Navy has since released a plan, stating that defueling the underground storage tanks may take until the end of 2024, identifying December 31, 2024 as the earliest date "that is consistent with the safe defueling of the facility."

However, that plan was rejected -- [deemed incomplete and "disappointing" by state officials](#).

Locals say 2024 is too long to wait for the promise of clean water.

"Until the facility is fully defueled and decommissioned, O'ahu's aquifer will not be safe," said DeFranco. ABC News has reached out to the Navy for comment on the lawsuit and the demands but has yet to receive a response.

Activists and residents are asking for a new, improved plan for defueling that speeds up the timeline to ensure residents have safe water sooner.

"We fear the Navy will continue to backpedal, stall and drag out the timeline while our aquifer is currently experiencing petroleum contamination directly as a result of their neglect. Red Hill continues to be an ongoing threat to life on O'ahu," said DeFranco.

The Red Hill storage facility sits directly above the Southern O'ahu Basal Aquifer.

According to the DOH, the Navy is responsible for ensuring safe water for nearby residents and ordered the agency to provide alternative drinking water for the roughly 93,000 people who may have been affected.

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## Cyber, Tech Awareness

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HEADLINE	08/31 Migration policy org confirms attack, breach
SOURCE	<a href="https://therecord.media/migration-policy-org-confirms-cyberattack-after-extortion-group-touts-theft/">https://therecord.media/migration-policy-org-confirms-cyberattack-after-extortion-group-touts-theft/</a>
GIST	The International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) confirmed on Wednesday it suffered a cyberattack that led to a data breach.

ICMPD operates in 90 countries conducting research, projects and activities centered around migration. It currently has 19 member states — most of which are European — and has observer status at the United Nations. It works with several UN and European agencies as well as states across Africa, Asia and South America.

Bernhard Schragl, communication coordinator for ICMPD, did not say when the attack took place but told The Record that the attackers managed to gain “limited access” to individual servers that held data.

ICMPD set up a task force of internal and external IT experts who are currently investigating the incident.

“Professional preparation as well as quick and decisive actions have prevented the attackers from inflicting additional harm. In less than 45 minutes after detection, an emergency response team was established, all external network connections were disconnected and all websites taken down to prevent the attack from spreading further,” Schragl said.

The organization is in the process of investigating what information was compromised, according to Schragl, who added that they have reported the incident to law enforcement agencies.

Schragl said ICMPD has either already informed or plans to inform any who had data that was affected by the attack about measures that need to be taken to protect themselves.

The attack on ICMPD was launched by the Karakurt extortion group, which boasted on Telegram of stealing financial documents, banking data and personal information.

On its leak site, the hacking group further explained that it stole 375 GB of data that included “correspondence on contracts, scans of contracts, project budgets, financial and insurance documents, invoices, passports, mailboxes of key members of the organization and much more.”

In June, the FBI, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), and the Treasury Department [released an alert about Karakurt](#), warning that the group was holding victim data for ransoms of \$25,000 to \$13 million in Bitcoin.

“Karakurt actors have typically provided screenshots or copies of stolen file directories as proof of stolen data. Karakurt actors have contacted victims’ employees, business partners, and clients with harassing emails and phone calls to pressure the victims to cooperate,” the alert explained.

“As of May 2022, the website contained several terabytes of data purported to belong to victims across North America and Europe, along with several ‘press releases’ naming victims who had not paid or cooperated, and instructions for participating in victim data ‘auctions,’” CISA added.

The agencies noted that Karakurt does not target specific industries or companies, often choosing victims based on ease of access.

The group typically gains access to systems by either purchasing stolen login credentials or purchasing access to victims who have been compromised by other cybercriminals.

Emsisoft threat analyst Brett Callow previously told The Record that the group has been active since the middle of 2021 and is believed to be a spin-off of the Conti ransomware group.

Several other security companies — including [Infinitum IT](#) and [Advanced Intelligence](#) — have released reports this year showing concrete ties between the infrastructure used by Conti and Karakurt.

Following the [release of troves of documents and chats](#) related to Conti, security companies found numerous links between the two groups.

Advanced Intelligence said Karakurt is a side business of the group behind Conti, allowing them to monetize the data stolen during attacks where organizations are able to block the ransomware encryption process.

Blockchain analysis firm Chainalysis has also previously identified several cryptocurrency wallets controlled by Karakurt which sent funds to Conti.

The U.S. agencies confirmed much of what was reported by these security companies, highlighting that Karakurt has attacked victims in the midst of ransomware incidents.

In several cases seen by CISA and the FBI, victims have gotten ransom notes from multiple ransomware variants simultaneously, “suggesting Karakurt actors purchased access to a compromised system that was also sold to another ransomware actor.”

The attack on ICMPD comes just a few months after [hackers targeted the Red Cross](#). In January, the international aid organization [said it had been hacked](#) in November by a group that stole data from a program called Restoring Family Links, a web-based system used by Red Cross volunteers to reunite family members separated by conflict, disaster, or migration.

The attack was so alarming to governments around the world that the U.S. State Department [released](#) a statement calling the attack a “dangerous development” that had “real consequences.

“This cyber incident has harmed the global humanitarian network’s ability to locate missing people and reconnect families,” officials said.

“This is why it is so vital that humanitarian data be respected and only used for intended purposes.”

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HEADLINE	<b>08/31 Chile agency struggles in ransomware attack</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://therecord.media/chile-says-govt-agency-struggling-with-ransomware-attack/">https://therecord.media/chile-says-govt-agency-struggling-with-ransomware-attack/</a>
GIST	<p>Chile’s cybersecurity incident response team said an unnamed government agency is dealing with a ransomware attack that targeted the organization’s Microsoft tools and VMware ESXi servers.</p> <p>Chile’s CSIRT said the attack started last Thursday but did not respond to requests for comment about what group was behind the attack or what department or agency was attacked.</p> <p>In a statement, the cybersecurity agency <a href="#">explained</a> that during the attack, the extension “.crypt” was added to all files in the department’s system.</p> <p>Recorded Future ransomware analyst Allan Liska said the extension is associated with the Thanos ransomware but it has also been associated with about a handful of other variants.</p> <p>“Which means it could be any number of families,” he explained.</p> <p>Chile’s cybersecurity agency said the attacker was able to take complete control of the victim’s system and left a ransom note, offering a communication channel and ways to contact them.</p> <p>The ransomware encrypted a wide variety of files and also included infostealer characteristics that took credentials from browsers, listed connected devices and drives, and had antivirus evasion capabilities.</p> <p>The group threatened to sell the information on the dark web if the unnamed agency didn’t respond within three days.</p> <p>No ransomware group has taken credit for the attack yet. Chile’s cybersecurity officials included some indicators of compromise and malware characteristics in their statement on the incident.</p>

	<p>They urged other government agencies to make sure their Microsoft and VMware assets are patched, institute network segmentation and contact cybersecurity officials in the event of any attack.</p> <p>Ransomware groups continue to show little fear in directly attacking governments, and over the past few months several Latin America and Caribbean nations have been hit. Chile's own consumer protection agency announced last week that it was hit with ransomware in April. No group has come forward to take credit for the attack.</p> <p>Last week, the Dominican Republic <a href="#">announced</a> that it was refusing to pay a ransom following an attack on one of its departments. Argentina's Judiciary of Córdoba was <a href="#">attacked</a> by a ransomware group two weeks ago.</p> <p>Ransomware groups <a href="#">targeted</a> the Secretary of State for Finance of Rio de Janeiro in April and <a href="#">crippled</a> the government of <a href="#">Costa Rica</a> in May. There were also <a href="#">several other</a> rumored attacks on South American nations that were never confirmed.</p> <p>The largest supermarket chain in Trinidad <a href="#">struggled to recover from a cyberattack</a> that caused outages at all of its locations throughout the country in May while hackers took control of the Twitter account of Brazilian retail giant Fast Shop <a href="#">in June</a>.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/31 State Dept. debars 3 ex-NSA employees</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.cyberscoop.com/former-us-intelligence-ops-state-department/">https://www.cyberscoop.com/former-us-intelligence-ops-state-department/</a>
GIST	<p>The State Department has banned three former National Security Agency employees from working on any matters related to International Traffic in Arms Regulations, which regulates the sale of military technologies overseas, due to their involvement in helping the United Arab Emirates carry out a widespread surveillance campaign to spy on dissidents, journalists and politicians as well as U.S. companies.</p> <p>The so-called disbarment for the former intelligence operatives will last at least three years, according to a State Department ruling released late last week.</p> <p><a href="#">The agency's settlement</a> with Ryan Adams, Marc Baier and Daniel Gericke for <a href="#">alleged violations of State Department-administered</a> ITAR is just the latest development in a scandal <a href="#">first revealed by Reuters</a> in 2019. Adams, Baier and Gericke entered into a <a href="#">deferred prosecution agreement</a> with the Justice Department in September under which they admitted to their conduct and agreed to give up both their security clearances and \$1.7 million.</p> <p>At the time, FBI Cyber Division Assistant Director Bryan Vorndran called the charges a “clear message to anybody, including former U.S. government employees, who had considered using cyberspace to leverage export-controlled information for the benefit of a foreign government or a foreign commercial company.”</p> <p>The State Department's administrative settlements resolve the ITAR charges that the men provided unauthorized “defense services involving electronic systems, equipment, and software that were specially designed for intelligence purposes that collect, survey, monitor, exploit, analyze, or produce information from the electromagnetic spectrum to foreign persons in the United Arab Emirates.”</p> <p>The UAE is a well-known user of foreign commercial surveillance tools. The regime also has been under fire for holding human rights activist Ahmed Mansoor in isolation since 2017, spurring calls from the United Nations, U.S. government and others for his release. Mansoor was found to have <a href="#">NSO-produced Pegasus spyware</a> on his phone in 2016.</p> <p>Adams, Baier and Gericke worked in a secret hacking unit of the UAE-based cybersecurity firm DarkMatter, which paid former U.S. intelligence officers to help the UAE hack into phones of activists</p>

such as Mansoor. Former DarkMatter employees told Reuters that the hacking unit, known as “Project Raven,” also spied on U.S. citizens and companies.

In September, [CyberScoop reported](#) that prosecutors alleged the men were responsible for two zero-click exploits that leveraged vulnerabilities in a U.S. tech company’s systems to break into millions of smartphones. The men also were accused of stealing documents and passwords from computers around the world.

Some suggested the State Department resolution following a deferred prosecution agreement with the Justice Department didn’t go far enough.

“Their conduct severely jeopardized national security and that is why I’m surprised DOJ didn’t seek a more stringent punishment,” said B. Stephanie Siegmann, who was a federal national security prosecutor for 18 years and is now a cybersecurity partner at Hinckley Allen. “They likely advanced the UAE’s offensive cyber operations and that is a serious national security concern.”

Siegmann said an ITAR violation of this nature could carry a 20-year sentence, but the Justice Department did not charge the three with violating those regulations in the criminal case. She suspects the relatively light punishment is due to law enforcement concerns about “discoverable classified information” though she acknowledged the men may not have ultimately been criminally prosecuted and incarcerated due to their cooperation with the FBI.

She called their conduct “far more egregious than numerous people prosecuted by DOJ over the years for ITAR violations.”

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HEADLINE	08/31 Financial data cheap for crooks to buy
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.scmagazine.com/analysis/identity-and-access/financial-data-inexpensive-for-cybercriminals-to-purchase-online">https://www.scmagazine.com/analysis/identity-and-access/financial-data-inexpensive-for-cybercriminals-to-purchase-online</a>
GIST	<p>For bank victims of identity theft or account incursion, the cost of compromised data and accounts can be quite significant in terms of time and money. However, for the cybercriminals that are accessing or selling this information, <a href="#">the price</a> may be as cheap as the cost of a large latte and a pastry.</p> <p>Recent research from <a href="#">Trustwave SpiderLabs</a> found that, “for the price of a Starbuck’s Caramel Frappuccino Grande and a cheese Danish, about \$8, a cybercriminal can obtain all the information needed to max out a person’s stolen credit card and possibly <a href="#">steal their identity</a>.”</p> <p>The research came as a result of a larger study into what cybercriminals charge for stolen financial records.</p> <p>The team found repositories of financial and identity records along with virtual private network (VPN) and remote desktop access credentials in various darknet markets and uncovered a complicated pricing structure that sees threat actors pricing their information in the same manner as any seller on a legitimate retail site. Prices vary depending upon the country from which the information was stolen and the quality and depth of the content associated with the credentials. However, in many cases, even legitimate financial records can sell for less than \$10 apiece, given the glut on the dark market.</p> <p>“Criminals opt to <a href="#">sell credit card</a> and driver’s license information wholesale instead to quickly cash out and to avoid the time and trouble required to use the assets,” according to the Trustwave SpiderLabs research. “Generally, threat actors’ activity is divided into business fields, someone is digging, attacking, and others are selling data or extracting user information and using it to obtain money. If the hacker or group does not know how to use the stolen information — they sell it.”</p> <p>Trustwave SpiderLabs found that, in most cases, what is being sold on a forum was previously sold or used by a hacker. So, a buyer may not get first-hand hacked data; and these threat actors do cash out. For</p>



	example, <a href="#">the FBI's 2021 Internet Crime Report</a> stated credit card fraud in the U.S. resulted in \$172,998,385 in losses, and this only takes into account reported incidents.
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HEADLINE	<b>08/31 'Robin Banks' targets financial firms</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.scmagazine.com/analysis/email-security/phishing-as-a-service-platform-robin-banks-targets-financial-firms">https://www.scmagazine.com/analysis/email-security/phishing-as-a-service-platform-robin-banks-targets-financial-firms</a>
GIST	<p>Financial institutions have recently been targeted by the so-called “Robin Banks” phishing-as-a-service attack platform (PhaaS), which has aimed its payload at text and emails.</p> <p>IronNet researchers have recently discovered the cybercrime syndicate Robin Banks providing ready-made phishing kits primarily targeting U.S.-based financial companies, as well as numerous companies in the U.K., Canada, and Australia.</p> <p>Bank of America, Wells Fargo, Capital One and Citigroup are among the U.S. banks that have been within the sights of this attack vector since March 2022, when threat actors became more proactive with Robin Banks.</p> <p>The kits enable users to access a personal dashboard that not only allows wallet management and page creation but also permits the inclusion of reCAPTCHA and user agent string checking mechanisms, resulting in an interface that is more sophisticated but easier to use than the BulletProofLink and 16Shop phishing kits, according to IronNet.</p> <p>“The primary motivation for scammers using this kit appears to be financial,” according to IronNet. “However, the kit does also ask victims for their Google and Microsoft credentials after they travel to the phishing landing page, indicating it could also be used by more advanced threat actors looking to gain initial access to corporate networks for ransomware or other post-intrusion activities.”</p> <p>How does this work? Threat actors, dubbed initial access brokers (IABs), sell access into legitimate corporate networks through stolen credentials or other access tools. IronNet found that an increasing number of cybercrime rings are selling the so-called “phishing kits,” as well as network access for the purpose of phishing financial employees or customers, all with the support of these IABs.</p> <p>“While this is a very mature product, it is not alone in its space. However, due to the low price versus some other PhaaS platforms, it is gaining popularity quickly,” said Erich Kron, security awareness advocate at KnowBe4. While not having carefully investigated, Kron said that this “does not appear to be nation-state backed, but rather created and run by a profit-seeking gang.”</p> <p>“While [Robin Banks] does have a focus on the financial industry, they are not alone in having templates and services designed to target financial institutions,” Kron said, adding that he anticipates seeing more non-financial focused templates from the group in the near future. In addition to the financial institutions, Robin Banks appears to already have templates available for attacks against Google, Microsoft, Netflix, and even T-Mobile accounts, he added.</p> <p>Phishing kits typically include sets of files that are “pre-packaged to contain all the code, graphics, and configuration files necessary to create a phishing page. This can include features like curated databases of targets or branded email templates, and they’re often designed to be easily deployable and reusable,” according to IronNet’s research.</p> <p>Robin Banks is reportedly pricing its most basic service at \$50 per month — with costs for a more expansive PhaaS offering ranging up to \$300 per month — which included ongoing updates and round-the-clock support. Hence, Robin Banks and other PhaaS purveyors are making sophisticated phishing scams more accessible to a wider base of less-skilled, would-be fraudsters and identity thieves, particularly aimed at financial institutions.</p>

	<p>At this point, it is “impossible to tell” how many people and accounts have been affected by Robin Banks, as many customers “may not even realize they have been hit yet until they check their accounts,” Kron said. Additionally, when individuals are hit by these sorts of attacks, there is rarely forensics done to determine the source of the phishing email or text message, so attribution is rare, Kron added.</p> <p>Kron said that while Robin Banks is hardly unique in its offering, it is “quite sophisticated and appears to be well made.” The service includes dashboards for users, which report on the successes of campaigns through click rates and other metrics, along with reports of the timely updates and revisions of the phishing templates, proves that this is a top tier product. In other words, Robin Banks gives its users a professional and polished experience, equivalent to what they would expect from a business software service vendor.</p> <p>“Given its price point and features,” Kron said, “I expect to see this becoming very popular in the future.”</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>09/01 Microsoft: account takeover bug in TikTok</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/microsoft-finds-account-takeover/">https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/microsoft-finds-account-takeover/</a>
GIST	<p>Security researchers have discovered a high severity vulnerability in TikTok’s Android app which could allow attackers to remotely hijack user accounts.</p> <p>Microsoft reported <a href="#">CVE-2022-28799</a> to the social media giant in February 2022, after which TikTok promptly fixed the issue. Although the app has an estimated 1.5 billion downloads on the Play Store, the bug has not yet been exploited in the wild, Microsoft claimed.</p> <p>“The vulnerability allowed the app’s deeplink verification to be bypassed,” <a href="#">explained Microsoft</a>.</p> <p>“Attackers could force the app to load an arbitrary URL to the app’s WebView, allowing the URL to then access the WebView’s attached JavaScript bridges and grant functionality to attackers.”</p> <p>In fact, Microsoft identified over 70 exposed JavaScript methods which, when paired with an exploit to hijack WebView such as the discovered bug, could be used to grant functionality to the attackers.</p> <p>By doing so, attackers can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retrieve the user’s authentication tokens by triggering a request to a controlled server and logging the cookie and the request headers</li> <li>• Retrieve or modify the user’s TikTok account data by triggering a request to a TikTok endpoint and retrieving the reply via the JavaScript callback</li> </ul> <p>“Once the attacker’s specially crafted malicious link is clicked by the targeted TikTok user, the attacker’s server is granted full access to the JavaScript bridge and can invoke any exposed functionality,” Microsoft wrote in its proof of concept.</p> <p>“The attacker’s server returns an HTML page containing JavaScript code to send video upload tokens back to the attacker as well as change the user’s profile biography.”</p> <p>With full control over users’ accounts, attackers could change their profile details, send messages, upload videos and even publish private videos.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>09/01 Detected cyber threats surge over 50%</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/detected-cyberthreats-surge-52-in/">https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/detected-cyberthreats-surge-52-in/</a>
GIST	A leading cybersecurity vendor blocked 63 billion threats in the first half of 2022 alone, over 50% more than the same period a year ago.

The findings come from the *Trend Micro 2022 Midyear Cybersecurity Report* and illustrate the scale of the challenge facing network defenders.

[Trend Micro highlighted](#) the persistent threat posed by ransomware-as-a-service (RaaS) groups as one that will continue to cause major challenges for organizations in the years to come.

It said detections of prolific groups such as LockBit and Conti increased by 500% year-on-year in 1H 2022.

Such groups will continue to adapt their tactics, techniques and procedures (TTPs) in the race for profits.

The report warned of a surge in threats targeting Linux systems, for example. It said detections of attacks on Linux servers and embedded systems grew 75% year-on-year in the first half of 2022. Both SMBs and larger organizations are now a target, it claimed.

Many RaaS groups exploit vulnerabilities as a primary attack vector. Their job is getting easier as the number of published CVEs continues to grow strongly.

Trend Micro's [Zero Day Initiative](#) published advisories on 944 vulnerabilities in the first half of 2021, a 23% year-on-year increase. The number of critical bug advisories it published soared by 400% over the same period.

Jon Clay, VP of threat intelligence for Trend Micro, warned of the growing and evolving threat from sophisticated criminal groups.

"That's why it's essential that organizations get better at mapping, understanding, and protecting their expanding digital attack surface," he added. "A single, unified cybersecurity platform is the best place to start."

[Recent research](#) from Trend Micro revealed that organizations may be struggling to do this, with two-fifths (43%) of global respondents admitting that their digital attack surface is "spiralling out of control."

It also found that, on average, respondents estimate having just 62% visibility of their attack surface.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/31 Ransomware attack on Portugal airline?</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/ragnar-locker-ransomware-claims-attack-on-portugals-flag-airline/">https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/ragnar-locker-ransomware-claims-attack-on-portugals-flag-airline/</a>
GIST	<p>The Ragnar Locker ransomware gang has claimed an attack on the flag carrier of Portugal, TAP Air Portugal, disclosed by the airline after its systems were hit on <a href="#">Thursday night</a>.</p> <p>The company said the attack was blocked and added that it found no evidence indicating the attackers gained access to customer information stored on impacted servers.</p> <p>"TAP was the target of a cyber-attack, now blocked. Operational integrity is guaranteed," the airline operator <a href="#">revealed</a> in a statement on Friday via its official Twitter account.</p> <p>"No facts have been found that allow us to conclude that there has been improper access to customer data. The website and app still have some instability."</p> <p>On Monday, the airline also published an <a href="#">alert</a> saying that its website and app are unable because of the Thursday cyberattack.</p> <p>It also added that customers could book flights, manage previously made bookings, and check in and download their boarding passes without logging in.</p>

Even though TAP is yet to confirm if this was a ransomware attack, the Ragnar Locker ransomware gang posted a new entry on their data leak website today, claiming to be behind last week's cyberattack that hit TAP's network.

The ransomware group says it has "reasons" to believe that hundreds of Gigabytes of data might have been compromised in the incident and threatened to provide "irrefutable evidence" to disprove TAP's statement that its customers' data wasn't accessed in the incident.

"Several days ago Tap Air Portugal made a press-release where they claimed with confidence that they successfully repelled the cyber attack and no data was compromised (but we do have some reasons to believe that hundreds of Gigabytes might be compromised)," the gang says.

Ragnar Locker also shared a screenshot of a spreadsheet containing what looks like customer information stolen from TAP's servers, including names, dates of birth, emails, and addresses.

[Ragnar Locker ransomware](#) payloads were first observed in attacks against several targets in late December 2019.

Attackers using Ragnar Locker ransomware have also encrypted the systems of Portuguese multinational energy giant Energias de Portugal (EDP) and asked for a 1580 BTC ransom (the equivalent of more than \$10 million at the time).

A list of Ragnar Locker's past victims also includes Japanese game maker [Capcom](#), computer chip manufacturer [ADATA](#), and aviation giant [Dassault Falcon](#).

In March, the FBI said that Ragnar Locker ransomware had been deployed on the networks of at least 52 organizations from multiple [US critical infrastructure sectors](#) since April 2020.

TAP (short for Transportes Aéreos Portugueses) is the largest airline in Portugal, accounting for more than 50% of arrivals and departures at the Lisbon International Airport [in 2019](#).

TAP Air Portugal didn't reply to a request for comment when BleepingComputer reached out earlier today.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/31 FBI aids Montenegro probe of cyberattack</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.securityweek.com/fbis-team-investigate-massive-cyberattack-montenegro?&amp;web_view=true">https://www.securityweek.com/fbis-team-investigate-massive-cyberattack-montenegro?&amp;web_view=true</a>
GIST	<p>A rapid deployment team of FBI cyber experts is heading to Montenegro to investigate a <a href="#">massive and coordinated attack on the tiny Balkan nation's government</a> and its services, the country's Ministry of Internal Affairs announced Wednesday.</p> <p>"This is another confirmation of the excellent cooperation between the United States of America and Montenegro and a proof that we can count on their support in any situation," the ministry said of the deployment of the Cyber Action Team.</p> <p>Last weekend, Montenegro's Agency for National Security said the country <a href="#">was "under a hybrid war at the moment,"</a> blaming the attack squarely on Russia, though without providing evidence. A cybercriminal extortion gang has claimed responsibility for at least part of the attack, infecting a parliamentary office with a variant of ransomware known as Cuba. Russian-speaking cybercriminals generally operate without Kremlin interference, as long as they don't target friendly nations.</p> <p>Montenegrin officials said Russia has a strong motive for such an attack because the Balkan state, once considered a strong Russian ally, joined NATO in 2017 despite strong opposition from the Kremlin. It has also joined Western sanctions against Moscow because of its invasion of Ukraine.</p>

	<p>Other Eastern European states deemed enemies of Russia have recently also sustained cyberattacks, mostly nuisance-level denial of service campaigns, in recent weeks. Targets have included networks in Moldova, Slovenia, Bulgaria and Albania.</p> <p>But the attack against Montenegro's infrastructure seemed more sustained and extensive, with targets including water supply systems, transportation services and online government services, among many others.</p> <p>On Monday, government officials said that an attack by hackers on the information system of Montenegrin institutions was still ongoing, but that the system will not suffer permanent damage.</p> <p>"A huge amount of money was invested in the attack on our system", said Minister of Public Administration Maras Dukaj. He added that his ministry cannot determine the source of the attack, but that there is "strong indication that it is coming from Russia."</p> <p>The Director of the Directorate for Information Security, Dusan Polovic, said that "150 cells" in a dozen state institutions were infected, and that the data of the Ministry of Public Administration was not permanently damaged.</p> <p>"The infected stations have been removed from the network and hard drives have been removed from them for further forensics," he said, adding that "the priority is to put the tax system into operation, but this will be done only when it is completely secure."</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>09/01 Errors in hundreds of apps expose data?</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wired.com/story/mobile-apps-cloud-credentials-exposed/">https://www.wired.com/story/mobile-apps-cloud-credentials-exposed/</a>
GIST	<p><b>AS WITH ANY</b> piece of software, mobile apps can create an array of security issues and exposures, from <a href="#">rogue programs</a> that are intentionally malicious to apps that contain an <a href="#">obscure but significant flaw</a>. Now, new research is shedding light on systemic oversights in mobile app cloud infrastructure that are all too common and create the risk that users' data could leak where it shouldn't or be compromised.</p> <p>Researchers from Broadcom's Symantec Threat Hunter team published findings on Thursday about the prevalence of hard-coded authentication credentials lurking in the cloud services that underlie hundreds of mainstream apps. These login credentials are often meant to give the app access to a single file or service, like a mechanism for an app to display public images from a company's website or run text through a translation service at a user's request. But in practice, the researchers found, these same credentials often grant access to all files stored in a cloud service, like company data, database backups, and system control components. And when multiple apps have been created by the same third-party development firm or incorporate the same publicly available software development kits (SDKs), these static authentication tokens may even grant access to the infrastructure and user data of multiple, unconnected apps.</p> <p>All of this means that if an attacker discovered these access tokens, they could potentially unlock massive and disparate troves of sensitive data all by finding one key under one doormat.</p> <p>"The cloud is still kind of a new frontier. And sometimes when you hear about the practices being used, you realize that a lot of organizations may not be where they are with security on other fronts," says Symantec's Dick O'Brien. "It's hard to say whether it's people cutting corners or whether it's just an ignorance of what you're exposing by putting those credentials out there, but it's certainly obvious that data isn't being ring-fenced anywhere near the way it should be."</p> <p>The researchers found 1,859 publicly available apps on both Android and iOS that contained hard-coded Amazon Web Services credentials. The vast majority were iOS apps, a discrepancy Symantec says it has tracked for years but hasn't fully explained. The credentials present in more than three-quarters of the apps granted access to private cloud services, and nearly half of those additionally gave access to private files. Fifty-three percent of the apps contained access tokens that were also found in other, often totally unrelated, apps.</p>

“Initially it was very surprising, but this is a systemic thing,” O’Brien says. “People need to do a complete audit of what they’re using and realize that there are multiple layers there. The practice of implementing hard coded access keys is not great. Temporary credentials that expire after a short period of time are probably the way to go, and also there needs to be greater awareness that you need to silo information.”

Symantec says it has notified the developers of the apps where it sees the most pressing issues and hopes to raise awareness about how insecure development practices and shared resources can create exposures without careful consideration and segmentation.

In one case, the researchers realized that several mainstream iOS banking apps were all using the same third-party AI digital identity software development kit that exposed cloud credentials of the shared service. While none of the banking apps themselves created the SDK, the credentials exposed its server structure and infrastructure blueprints, source code, and the AI models underlying the identity service. And more than 300,000 biometric fingerprint files from users of five of the mobile banking apps were leaking and potentially exposed.

In another case, the researchers noticed what it calls a large hospitality and entertainment company working with a technology company on sports betting apps. In total, hard-coded credentials gave infrastructure access to 16 online gambling apps, exposing their cloud services and even granting root access to take control of this backend platform.

Symantec's O'Brien emphasizes that while the company isn't naming the impacted apps, it hopes the findings will raise awareness about these common pitfalls and their potentially outsize impact on users. “The things we found—it illustrates the significance of what we’re dealing with here,” he says.

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HEADLINE	<b>09/01 Ukraine turns trolls onto Russia: NAFO</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/09/01/nafo-ukraine-russia/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/09/01/nafo-ukraine-russia/</a>
GIST	<p><b>More than six months in, the war in Ukraine has become a little surreal.</b> This past weekend, Ukraine’s Defense Ministry shared a doctored photograph of a Shiba Inu dog wearing a military uniform, apparently gushing over the site of a missile launch.</p> <p>“Today we want to give a shout-out to a unique entity,” the tweet read, before pointing to an unusually named group — the North Atlantic Fellas Organization.</p> <p>If you are the sort of person who gets your news from, say, a newspaper website, you may have little idea what NAFO is. But if you’re the sort of person who has spent the last six months scouring Twitter for news about the war in Ukraine, signing up for obscure Telegram accounts and reading accounts of the latest Ukrainian strikes on Russia on blogs devoted to open-source intelligence (OSINT) ... well, it’s quite likely you’re already a fella yourself.</p> <p>For the former, let’s explain. Over recent months, Ukraine-sympathetic internet users have come together to support Kyiv’s war effort. The Shiba Inu is a distinctive dog breed from Japan, which for over a decade, has been a recurrent motif in internet culture. You may recognize it as a <a href="#">“doge,” beloved of Elon Musk</a> and millions of other internet users.</p> <p><a href="#">Vice’s Motherboard</a> dates the use of Shiba Inu as a “fella” fighting the war in Ukraine to May, when an artist named Kama began creating custom images of the “fellas” for those who donated money to the Georgian Legion — a volunteer military unit in Ukraine that took on board many foreigners. “Out of boredom, I started making other Fellas and imprinting them on random images from Ukraine,” Kama told Motherboard earlier this summer.</p> <p>The movement went on to have a landmark moment in June, when Russian diplomat Mikhail Ulyanov got into an argument with a “fella” over threats to civilians. Ulyanov, Russia’s ambassador to</p>



international organizations in Vienna and a vocal advocate for Russia's position on social media, made the mistake of responding to a NAFO member.

"You pronounced this nonsense. Not Me." would become a rallying cry for NAFO (if you hadn't guessed, a play on the North Atlantic Treaty Organization). It showed that the tables could be turned on Russia, when it came to trolling. The fellas soon found they had more and more supporters in the West — just recently, Rep. Adam Kinzinger (R-Ill.) joined the troll army.

On Tuesday, Ukraine's Defense Minister Oleksii Reznikov changed his Twitter profile photo in what he [said](#) was a personal salute to [#NAFOfellas](#)."

**This has been a trollish war.** That in itself is hardly a surprise. For years, Russia has used online tactics to spread division and create diversions. Most notorious perhaps were the St. Petersburg "troll farms" used in [the run-up to the 2016 U.S. presidential election](#).

It wasn't always covert. The Twitter account of Russia's Embassy in London became notorious for its meme-filled messages, often repurposed from Reddit, 4chan and other dark corners of the internet, designed to both rally support and ignite outrage. It wasn't always the most thoughtful stuff...

...But it did appear to be an officially sanctioned policy. After the Guardian [reported in 2017](#) that the tweets could have been the work of Deputy Ambassador Alexander Kramarenko, the Russian Embassy suggested that they were instead a "collaborative effort."

What's different about this time is that Russia isn't the one in charge of the trolling. Russia has largely been stuck with the turgid ideological propaganda about Ukraine (a 7,000-word essay written by Russian President Vladimir Putin [last summer was an early taste](#) of just how horrifyingly sincere Moscow's view of the conflict would be).

Meanwhile, supporters of Ukraine have rallied around groups like NAFO, while pro-Ukrainian memes have flooded the internet. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky [was quickly meme-ified](#). An online language developed, from "Rashist" (a derogatory word that combines Russian, racist and fascist) to "Tractor Troops" (the Ukrainian farmers who towed abandoned Russian heavy machinery in the early days of the war).

And the Ukrainian government has embraced it, using [official websites to highlight memes](#) and personally thanking those who spread them online. Official accounts have mocked not just Russian leaders and soldiers but its citizens, too. Footage of tourists fleeing Crimea after still-unexplained explosions last month was paired with a song by '80s pop group Bananarama and the message: "Time to head home."

The history goes back some way. Writing in Slate earlier this year, Charles Shaw, an assistant professor of Soviet history at Central European University in Vienna, [argued that Ukraine](#) was repurposing an old Soviet tactic against Russia. Kyiv was "consciously deploying laughter to define its position on the correct side of a just war, which is a playbook the Soviets used to great effect versus Nazi Germany," Shaw wrote.

**It may all seem frivolous.** It's anything but.

NAFO, for example, have [served as fundraisers](#) for the Ukrainian military, even raising money so Ukraine would paint their memes on a tank, artfully dubbed "Super Bonker 9000." Indirectly, the largely English-language memes have kept Western attention on Ukraine's war — attention that is vital given the importance of Western arms to Ukrainian forces.

The group has also undercut both Russia's somber justifications for the war, as well as accounts from Russian state allies that had attempted to show the conflict going in a better light than it actually was. It's noteworthy that many of NAFO's supporters come from the OSINT community.



	<p>Eliot Higgins, the founder the best-known OSINT website BellingCat, <a href="#">tweeted this week</a> that he would be talking about NAFO in a conference “as an example of online communities organically responding to disinformation from governments and counterfactual communities,” adding that it was “good for morale.”</p> <p>But there are risks to the tactic, too. The surreal nature of the memes shouldn’t mask the bloody reality on the ground nor become dehumanizing, as Soviet propaganda against Germany did during World War II, according to Shaw. It’s notable that the Ukraine Defense Ministry has moved to embrace NAFO the same week that it banned reporters from traveling to parts of the country, sparking speculation that a counterattack is imminent.</p> <p>Is a counterattack actually happening? Ukraine’s response so far has been to not answer, but to do what it knows best: Troll the Russians, once again.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/31 Prankster seizes Brazil website of president</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/31/jair-bolsonaro-brazil-website-president">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/aug/31/jair-bolsonaro-brazil-website-president</a>
GIST	<p>An internet prankster has hijacked a website long used to glorify Brazil’s far-right president and turned it into a devastating online excoriation of Jair Bolsonaro’s “clownish”, “neo-fascist” government.</p> <p>Bolsonaro and his three politician sons have reportedly used the bolsonaro.com.br domain as an official mouthpiece since the early 2000s.</p> <p>But earlier this month a Brazilian objector with rather less affection for the populist clan managed to commandeer the URL, apparently after the Bolsonaros failed to pay for its renewal.</p> <p>The result was a public relations fiasco for the South American rabble-rouser, as Bolsonaro’s former propaganda outlet began portraying him as a cretinous, subservient, incompetent, duplicitous, corrupt and tyrannical hate-filled liar.</p> <p>One cartoon shows a snake emerging from the Brazilian president’s blood-stained jaws alongside an excerpt from Psalm 140: “Rescue me, O Lord, from evil men ... the poison of vipers is on their lips.”</p> <p>A second parody shows Bolsonaro behind bars, where many angry voters believe he belongs because of his internationally condemned response to a Covid outbreak that has killed more than 680,000 Brazilians.</p> <p>“Bolsonaro is weak and pathetic,” proclaims one text on the dissident website decrying the Brazilian leader’s servility to his US ally Donald Trump.</p> <p>“Bolsonaro is a court jester,” announces another scathing critique alongside a caricature in which Brazil’s 67-year-old leader appears as a neck ruffle-wearing clown.</p> <p>Elsewhere on the website Bolsonaro is likened to a milkmaid, the Grim Reaper, a mythological faun, a feathered chicken, Satan and Adolf Hitler.</p> <p>“This website is not administered by nor does it belong to the Bolsonaro family,” says a disclaimer at the foot of the page.</p> <p>The expropriated URL comes at a sensitive time for Bolsonaro, who polls suggest will fail to win re-election when 156 million Brazilians choose their next leader in just over a month.</p> <p>The ex-president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva currently leads in the polls by a 12-point margin and retains control of the website bearing his name.</p>

	<p>On Sunday, Bolsonaro lost his cool during a televised presidential debate, lashing out at a prominent female journalist who he labelled “an embarrassment to Brazilian journalism”.</p> <p>On Wednesday the embarrassment was Bolsonaro’s as reports that his website had been captured prompted a tsunami of sniggering and contempt.</p> <p>“I want to see more people stand up to the fascist,” the activist supposedly responsible for the stunt wrote on Twitter. “Now is not the time to remain silent.”</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/31 Sales sophisticated computer chips limited</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/31/technology/gpu-chips-china-russia.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/31/technology/gpu-chips-china-russia.html</a>
GIST	<p>The Biden administration has imposed new restrictions on sales of some sophisticated <a href="#">computer chips</a> to China and Russia, the U.S. government’s latest attempt to use semiconductors as a tool to hobble rivals’ advances in fields such as high-performance computing and artificial intelligence.</p> <p>The new limits affect high-end models of chips known as graphics processing units, or GPUs, which are sold by the Silicon Valley companies Nvidia and Advanced Micro Devices. Such products were originally developed to render images in video games but in the past decade were widely deployed in the <a href="#">largest supercomputers</a> used by scientists and by internet companies for applications such as recognizing speech and objects in photographs.</p> <p>Supercomputers are used in applications that include weapons development and intelligence gathering, and some large systems in China have been <a href="#">linked to surveillance</a> of the country’s Muslim minorities. A.I. technology is also increasingly being used for purposes such as identifying faces in video images.</p> <p>The restrictions are part of a <a href="#">cold war</a> between China and the United States for primacy in advanced technologies.</p> <p>The Biden administration, building on limits begun under former President Donald J. Trump, has adopted measures aimed at restricting access by companies such as <a href="#">China’s Huawei</a> to advanced chips and foreign semiconductor manufacturing. China has designed many chips on its own, but generally relies on factories in Taiwan to manufacture the most advanced models.</p> <p>In statements on Wednesday, Nvidia and AMD acknowledged the new restrictions.</p> <p>Nvidia, by far the largest GPU maker, <a href="#">said</a> the federal government would now require it to seek export licenses to sell two high-end chips used with server systems in data centers. The government said the new requirement would address the risk that those products might be used in, or diverted to, a military use in China and Russia, according to the company.</p> <p>Nvidia has many customers in China, but does not currently sell to Russia. It said the new measures affected a business that generated about \$400 million in revenue in its most recent fiscal quarter.</p> <p>AMD said the measures appeared to affect sales of one of its high-end GPUs to China and Russia. It said it did not believe the restrictions would have a material effect on its business.</p> <p>The scope of the government’s actions appears to go beyond Nvidia and AMD. Other companies that make tool or design software have received similar letters in recent weeks informing them that the high-end technologies they export to China have been restricted, according to a person familiar with the situation, who asked to remain anonymous in order to discuss private deliberations.</p> <p>A spokesman for the Commerce Department said it was conducting a review of policies related to China and might adopt new measures to keep advanced technologies out of the wrong hands.</p>

Without commenting on the chip restrictions specifically, the spokesman said possible future steps include “preventing China’s acquisition and use of U.S. technology in the context of its military-civil fusion program to fuel its military modernization efforts, conduct human rights abuses and enable other malign activities.”

In the last few years, the Commerce Department’s Bureau of Industry and Security has tightened restrictions on supplying certain U.S. technologies to China, arguing that the goods were being sold through civilian supply chains but ultimately went toward military uses, like weapons, aircraft and surveillance technology. Companies can request a license to sell restricted items to specific customers, but most of those applications are denied.

Nvidia’s and AMD’s statements indicated that they did not expect licenses to be granted in most cases. AMD said it expected the measures to “prevent” the sale of a product called the MI250 to China and Russia.

Nvidia said the measures affected an existing product, the A100, as well as a product that is expected to be available later this year, the H100. It added that the restrictions might hurt its ability to complete development of the H100 in a timely manner or support existing customers of the A100, and might require the company to transition certain operations out of China.

The measures come at a tough time for Nvidia. Demand for GPUs used in video game play and in cryptocurrency mining has dropped sharply, and in early August, Nvidia posted quarterly revenue that was well below what it had forecast in May.

Nvidia’s stock fell more than 6 percent late Wednesday after it confirmed the new government restrictions, which had been the subject of earlier articles in Chinese news outlets.

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HEADLINE	<b>08/31 ‘Mass surveillance on a budget’ for police</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.thenewstribune.com/news/business/article265173091.html">https://www.thenewstribune.com/news/business/article265173091.html</a>
GIST	<p>Local law enforcement agencies from suburban Southern California to rural North Carolina have been using an obscure cellphone tracking tool, at times without search warrants, that gives them the power to follow people’s movements months back in time, according to public records and internal emails obtained by The Associated Press.</p> <p>Police have used “Fog Reveal” to search hundreds of billions of records from 250 million mobile devices, and harnessed the data to create location analyses known among law enforcement as “patterns of life,” according to thousands of pages of records about the company.</p> <p>Sold by Virginia-based Fog Data Science LLC, Fog Reveal has been used since at least 2018 in criminal investigations ranging from the murder of a nurse in Arkansas to tracing the movements of a potential participant in the Jan. 6 insurrection at the Capitol. The tool is rarely, if ever, mentioned in court records, something that defense attorneys say makes it harder for them to properly defend their clients in cases in which the technology was used.</p> <p>The company was developed by two former high-ranking Department of Homeland Security officials under ex-President George W. Bush. It relies on advertising identification numbers, which Fog officials say are culled from popular cellphone apps such as Waze, Starbucks and hundreds of others that target ads based on a person’s movements and interests, according to police emails. That information is then sold to companies like Fog.</p> <p>“It’s sort of a mass surveillance program on a budget,” said Bennett Cyphers, a special advisor at the Electronic Frontier Foundation, a digital privacy rights advocacy group.</p> <p>The documents and emails were obtained by EFF through Freedom of Information Act requests. The group shared the files with The AP, which independently found that Fog sold its software in about 40</p>

contracts to nearly two dozen agencies, according to GovSpend, a company that keeps tabs on government spending. The records and AP's reporting provide the first public account of the extensive use of Fog Reveal by local police, according to analysts and legal experts who scrutinize such technologies.

"Local law enforcement is at the front lines of trafficking and missing persons cases, yet these departments are often behind in technology adoption," Matthew Broderick, a Fog managing partner, said in an email. "We fill a gap for underfunded and understaffed departments."

Because of the secrecy surrounding Fog, however, there are scant details about its use and most law enforcement agencies won't discuss it, raising concerns among privacy advocates that it violates the Fourth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which protects against unreasonable search and seizure.

What distinguishes Fog Reveal from other cellphone location technologies used by police is that it follows the devices through their advertising IDs, unique numbers assigned to each device. These numbers do not contain the name of the phone's user, but can be traced to homes and workplaces to help police establish pattern-of-life analyses.

"The capability that it had for bringing up just anybody in an area whether they were in public or at home seemed to me to be a very clear violation of the Fourth Amendment," said Davin Hall, a former crime data analysis supervisor for the Greensboro, North Carolina Police Department. "I just feel angry and betrayed and lied to."

Hall resigned in late 2020 after months of voicing concerns about the department's use of Fog to police attorneys and the city council.

While Greensboro officials acknowledged Fog's use and initially defended it, the police department said it allowed its subscription to expire earlier this year because it didn't "independently benefit investigations."

But federal, state and local police agencies around the U.S. continue to use Fog with very little public accountability. Local police agencies have been enticed by Fog's affordable price: it can start as low as \$7,500 a year. And some departments that license it have shared access with other nearby law enforcement agencies, the emails show.

Police departments also like how quickly they can access detailed location information from Fog. Geofence warrants, which tap into GPS and other sources to track a device, are accessed by obtaining such data from companies, like Google or Apple. This requires police to obtain a warrant and ask the tech companies for the specific data they want, which can take days or weeks.

Using Fog's data, which the company claims is anonymized, police can geofence an area or search by a specific device's ad ID numbers, according to a user agreement obtained by AP. But, Fog maintains that "we have no way of linking signals back to a specific device or owner," according to a sales representative who emailed the California Highway Patrol in 2018, after a lieutenant asked whether the tool could be legally used.

Despite such privacy assurances, the records show that law enforcement can use Fog's data as a clue to find identifying information. "There is no (personal information) linked to the (ad ID)," wrote a Missouri official about Fog in 2019. "But if we are good at what we do, we should be able to figure out the owner."

Federal oversight of companies like Fog is an evolving legal landscape. On Monday, the Federal Trade Commission sued a data broker called Kochava that, like Fog, provides its clients with advertising IDs that authorities say can easily be used to find where a mobile device user lives, which violates rules the commission enforces. And there are bills before Congress now that, if passed, would regulate the industry.

Fog's Broderick said in an email that the company does not have access to people's personal information, and draws from "commercially available data without restrictions to use," from data brokers "that

legitimately purchase data from apps in accordance with their legal agreements.” The company refused to share information about how many police agencies it works with.

“We are confident Law Enforcement has the responsible leadership, constraints, and political guidance at the municipal, state, and federal level to ensure that any law enforcement tool and method is appropriately used in accordance with the laws in their respective jurisdictions,” Broderick said.

Kevin Metcalf, a Washington County, Arkansas prosecutor, said he has used Fog Reveal without a warrant, especially in “exigent circumstances.” In these cases, the law provides a warrant exemption when a crime-in-process endangers people or an officer.

Metcalf also leads the National Child Protection Task Force, a nonprofit that combats child exploitation and trafficking. Fog is listed on its website as a task force sponsor and a company executive chairs the nonprofit’s board. Metcalf said Fog has been invaluable to cracking missing children cases and homicides.

“We push the limits, but we do them in a way that we target the bad guys,” he said. “Time is of the essence in those situations. We can’t wait on the traditional search warrant route.”

Fog was used successfully in the murder case of 25-year-old nurse Sydney Sutherland, who had last been seen jogging near Newport, Arkansas before she disappeared, Metcalf said.

Police had little evidence to go on when they found her phone in a ditch, so Metcalf said he shared his agency’s access to Fog with the U.S. Marshals Service to figure out which other devices had been nearby at the time she was killed. He said Fog helped lead authorities to arrest a farmer in Sutherland’s rape and murder in August 2020, but its use was not documented in court records reviewed by AP.

Cyphers, who led EFF’s public records work, said there hasn’t been any previous record of companies selling this kind of granular data directly to local law enforcement.

“We’re seeing counties with less than 100,000 people where the sheriff is using this extremely high tech, extremely invasive, secretive surveillance tool to chase down local crime,” Cyphers said.

One such customer is the sheriff’s office in rural Rockingham County, North Carolina, population 91,000 and just north of Greensboro, where Hall still lives. The county bought a one-year license for \$9,000 last year and recently renewed it.

“Rockingham County is tiny in terms of population. It never ceases to amaze me how small agencies will scoop up tools that they just absolutely don’t need, and nobody needs this one,” Hall said.

Sheriff’s spokesman Lt. Kevin Suthard confirmed the department recently renewed its license but declined to offer specifics about the use of Fog Reveal or how the office protects individuals’ rights.

“Because it would then be less effective as criminals could be cognizant that we have the device and adjust their commission of the crimes accordingly. Make sense?” Suthard said.

Fog has aggressively marketed its tool to police, even beta testing it with law enforcement, records show. The Dallas Police Department bought a Fog license in February after getting a free trial and “seeing a demonstration and hearing of success stories from the company,” Senior Cpl. Melinda Gutierrez, a department spokeswoman, said in an email.

Fog’s tool is accessed through a web portal. Investigators can enter a crime scene’s coordinates into the database, which brings back search results showing a device’s Fog ID, which is based on its unique ad ID number.

Police can see which device IDs were found near the location of the crime. Detectives or other officers can also search the location for IDs going forward from the time of the crime and back at least 180 days,

according to the company's user license agreement. But, Fog's data can go back as far as June 2017, according to emails from a Fog representative to Florida and California law enforcement agencies.

While the data does not directly identify who owns a device, the company often gives law enforcement information it needs to connect it to addresses and other clues that help detectives figure out people's identities, according to company representatives' emails.

It is unclear how Fog makes these connections, but a company it refers to as its "data partner" called Venntel, Inc. has access to an even greater trove of users' mobile data.

Venntel is a large broker that has supplied location data to agencies such as Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the FBI. The Department of Homeland Security's watchdog is currently investigating how U.S. border agents used Venntel data to track people's locations inside the U.S. without a search warrant. The company also has faced congressional inquiries about privacy concerns tied to federal law enforcement agencies' use of its data.

Venntel and Fog work closely together to aid police detectives during investigations, emails show. Their marketing brochures are nearly identical, too, and Venntel staff has recommended Fog to law enforcement, according to the emails. Venntel said "the confidential nature of our business relationships" prevented them from responding to AP's specific questions, and Fog would not comment on the relationship.

While Fog says in its marketing materials that it collects data from thousands of apps, like Starbucks and Waze, companies are not always aware of who is using their data. Venntel and Fog can collect billions of data points filled with detailed information because many apps embed invisible tracking software that follow users' behavior. This software also lets the apps sell customized ads that are targeted to a person's current location. In turn, data brokers' software can Hoover up personal data that can be used for other purposes. Fog did not specifically say how it got the data from Starbucks and Waze.

For their part, Starbucks and Waze denied any relationship to Fog. Starbucks said it had not given permission to its business partners to share customer information with Fog.

"Starbucks has not approved Ad ID data generated by our app to be used in this way by Fog Data Science LLC. In our review to date, we have no relationship with this company," said Megan Adams, a Starbucks spokesperson.

"We have never had a relationship with Fog Data Science, have not worked with them in any capacity, and have not shared information with them," a Waze spokesperson said.

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Fog Data Science LLC is headquartered in a nondescript brick building in Leesburg, Virginia.

It also has related entities in New Jersey, Ohio and Texas. It was founded in 2016 by Robert Liscouski, who led the Department of Homeland Security's National Cyber Security Division in the George W. Bush era. His colleague, Broderick, is a former U.S. Marine brigadier general who ran DHS' tech hub, the Homeland Security Operations Center, during Hurricane Katrina in 2005. A House bipartisan committee report cited Broderick amongst others for failing to coordinate a swift federal response to the deadly hurricane. Broderick resigned from DHS shortly thereafter.

In marketing materials, Fog also has touted its ability to offer police "predictive analytics," a buzzword often used to describe high-tech policing tools that purport to predict crime hotspots. Liscouski and another Fog official have worked at companies focused on predictive analytics, machine learning and software platforms supporting artificial intelligence.

"It is capable of delivering both forensic and predictive analytics and near real-time insights on the daily movements of the people identified with those mobile devices," reads an email announcing a Fog training

last year for members of the National Fusion Center Association, which represents a network of intelligence-sharing partnerships created after the Sept. 11 attacks.

Fog's Broderick said the company had not invested in predictive applications, and provided no details about any uses the tool had for predicting crime.

Despite privacy advocates' concerns about warrantless surveillance, Fog Reveal has caught on with local and state police forces. It's been used in a number of high-profile criminal cases, including one that was the subject of the television program "48 Hours."

In 2017, a world-renowned exotic snake breeder was found dead, lying in a pool of blood in his reptile breeding facility in rural Missouri. Police initially thought the breeder, Ben Renick, might have died from a poisonous snake bite. But the evidence soon pointed to murder.

During its investigation, emails show the Missouri State Highway Patrol used Fog's portal to search for cellphones at Renick's home and breeding facility and zeroed in on a mobile device. Working with Fog, investigators used the data to identify the phone owner's identity: it was the Renicks' babysitter.

Police were able to log the babysitter's whereabouts over time to create a pattern of life analysis.

It turned out to be a dead-end lead. Renick's wife, Lynlee, later was charged and convicted of the murder.

Prosecutors did not cite Fog in a list of other tools they used in the investigation, according to trial exhibits examined by the AP.

But Missouri officials seemed pleased with Fog's capabilities, even though it didn't directly lead to an arrest.

"It was interesting to see that the system did pick up a device that was absolutely in the area that day. Too bad it did not belong to a suspect!" a Missouri State Highway Patrol analyst wrote in an email to Fog.

In another high-profile criminal probe, records show the FBI asked state intelligence officials in Iowa for help with Fog as it investigated potential participants in the events at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6.

"Not definitive but still waiting to talk things over with a FOG rep," wrote Justin Parker, deputy director of the Iowa Department of Public Safety, in an email to an FBI official in September 2021. It was unclear from the emails if Fog's data factored into an arrest, and neither the FBI nor Iowa officials would comment.

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Metcalf, the Arkansas prosecutor, has argued against congressional efforts to require search warrants when using technologies like Fog Reveal. He believes Americans have given up any reasonable expectation of privacy when they use free apps and likens EFF's objections to tech like Fog to a "cult of privacy."

"I think people are going to have to make a decision on whether we want all this free technology, we want all this free stuff, we want all the selfies," he said. "But we can't have that and at the same time say, 'I'm a private person, so you can't look at any of that.' That just seems crazy."

Although he is not an official Fog employee, Metcalf said he would step in to lead training sessions including the tool for federal prosecutors, federal agencies and police, including the Chicago Police Department, the emails show.

That kind of hands-on service and word-of-mouth marketing in tight-knit law enforcement circles seems to have helped increase Fog's popularity.



The Maryland State Police is among the many agencies that have had contracts for Fog Reveal, and records show investigators believed it had a lot of potential.

“Companies have receptors all over. Malls, shopping centers, etc. They’re all around you,” wrote Sgt. John Bedell of the Criminal Enforcement Division, in an email to a colleague.

The agency purchased a year of access to Fog in 2018.

“Picture getting a suspect’s phone then in the extraction being able to see everyplace they’d been in the last 18 months plotted on a map you filter by date ranges,” wrote Bedell. “The success lies in the secrecy.”

Elena Russo, a spokesperson for the agency, confirmed it had a Fog license previously but that it had lapsed.

“Unfortunately, it was not helpful in solving any crimes,” she wrote in an email.

Still, as more local policing agencies sign up for Fog, some elected officials said they have been left in the dark. Several officials said there wasn’t enough information to grasp what services Fog actually provides. “Who is this company? What are the track records? What are the privacy protections?” asked Anaheim council member Jose Moreno, remembering his confusion about Fog during a 2020 council meeting.

“That night our chief had very little information for us.” In Anaheim, the Fog license was paid for by a federal “Urban Area Security Initiative,” DHS grants that help localities fund efforts to prevent terrorism.

A police spokesman said the department has not used it. Defense attorneys worry there are few legal restrictions on law enforcement’s use of location data. It’s a gap police agencies exploit, and often don’t disclose in court, said Michael Price, litigation director of the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers’ Fourth Amendment Center.

“(Fog) is exceedingly rare to see in the wild because the cops often don’t get warrants,” said Price. “Even if you do ask for (information) sometimes they say ‘We don’t know what you are talking about.’”

Privacy advocates worry Fog’s location tracking could be put to other novel uses, like keeping tabs on people who seek abortions in states where it is now illegal. These concerns were heightened when a Nebraska woman was charged in August with helping her teenage daughter end a pregnancy after investigators got hold of their Facebook messages.

Government’s use of location data is still being weighed by the courts, too.

In 2018, the Supreme Court ruled that police generally need a warrant to look at records that reveal where cellphone users have been.

Nearly two years after walking off the crime data supervisor job with the Greensboro police force, Davin Hall still worries about police surveillance in neighboring communities.

“Anyone with that login information can do as many searches as they want,” Hall said. “I don’t believe the police have earned the trust to use that, and I don’t believe it should be legal.”

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## Terrorism, Extremism

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HEADLINE	09/01 Rise of jihadi prison gangs
SOURCE	<a href="https://unherd.com/2022/09/the-rise-of-jihadi-prison-gangs/">https://unherd.com/2022/09/the-rise-of-jihadi-prison-gangs/</a>

By the last [count](#), there were more than 200 convicted terrorists — most Islamist, but some far-Right — currently housed at Her Majesty’s pleasure in British prisons, with a further 200 or so convicted of other offences but deemed similarly radicalised. It is a testament to how “out of sight, out of mind” prisons are that attention among extremism and terrorism experts has meandered elsewhere — despite there being higher numbers of incarcerated Islamist extremists than ever before, and despite what we know about prisons serving as jihadist incubators across the world.

Many of Britain’s most dangerous jihadists are imprisoned, perhaps affording us this false sense of security. But the sporadic information we get from behind the prison walls is anything but reassuring. While much hope is pinned on the largely uncharted territory of “deradicalisation”, its targets are making a mockery of these efforts. As the Chief Inspector of Prisons made clear a few weeks ago, the highest-risk prisoners in the country are outright boycotting these interventions, with some [offenders](#) listening to music or pretending to sleep during their one to one sessions.

On the other hand, even those who [appear to comply](#) may pose a threat, as Usman Khan’s [slaying](#) of those who sought only to help him tragically demonstrated. While participating in an educational course or qualification can be taken by authorities as a sign of progress, it is no objective measure of deradicalisation, not least when the knowledge gained can be put to use for the cause, to better proselytise or wage war.

Prisons are not isolated and cut off from the world, their walls are porous: people, information and material come and go. Meanwhile, the jihadists inside do not see imprisonment as an end to their struggle — so nor should we. The West’s experience with jihadism, now into its fourth decade, shows how its adherents often see their incarceration as a rite of passage and opportunity: to better prepare for jihad, to gain qualifications and skills on the taxpayer, to forge crucial connections and relationships, to proselytise among the prison population, and to test their faith.

Prisons around the world have proven integral to the global jihadist movement’s remarkable resiliency and regenerative capability, but so has naivety. In 2005, a jailed Parisian named Chérif Kouachi led his social worker to believe he had been “tricked” into associating with extremists busy funnelling fighters to the insurgency in Iraq. On the inside, however, Chérif fraternised with jihadi veteran Djamel Beghal, who had helped recruit “shoe bomber” Richard Reid in London in the Nineties. Exactly a decade after being “tricked”, Chérif and his brother Saïd burst into the offices of Charlie Hebdo magazine to massacre the writers, satirists and illustrators inside.

Today, no longer pick-up riding or passport-burning, the Islamic State’s jihadists are marooned in the dilapidated camps and makeshift prisons of Northern Syria, where — like the Islamists in Bosnia and Afghanistan before them — they play back our own tropes about their manipulation and vulnerability for the domestic audiences they once threatened on social media. Some even offer to help deradicalise or prevent radicalisation in future, while lying about their own trajectory into terror.

Inside the British prison system though, a more bellicose extremist subculture appears to be developing. According to a recent [review](#), among the imprisoned extremists an Islamist gang culture has developed. The counterterrorism lead at HMP Whitemoor, the site of Britain’s first attack [inside](#) the prison walls, told an inquest that terror offenders are held in a kind of “perverse esteem”. while Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation, Johnathan Hall QC, wrote how some offenders enjoy a “distinctly heroic profile”.

The risk, though, is not just of attacks. The failed state-building project of Isis should have made clear there is an ideological endgame, an all-encompassing worldview, a way of living and a revolutionary overhaul of state and society which jihadis seek to usher in. In their own microcosms, imprisoned jihadists are trying to live their lives in accordance with this endgame from the inside. There are cases of extremists intimidating staff and prisoners who do not comply with their interpretation of *Sharia* and holding crude *Sharia* courts which mete out floggings. Self-styled ‘emirs’ exert such influence over prison wings that authorities sometimes appeal to them to help restore order.

Surrounded by like-minded practitioners of their faith, they are living pure, virtuous and rigorist lives in accordance with God's will. To them, this life of belief *is* the straight and narrow, while the rest of us are morally decayed hypocrites and criminals. For them, the idea they need deradicalising or rehabilitating is a bad joke and worthy of scorn. Just a few hours a week of mentoring and interventions stands little chance of competing with the offender's entire social circle, the moral universe which colours it, the norms which govern their every action and interaction, and the status they enjoy as a terrorism offender on the inside.

This is not to say that there is no hope, but that it will take an almighty effort to dismantle a worldview that we don't seem able to fully comprehend, or at times even discuss out of misplaced sensitivities. Being realistic about the scale of the challenge and treating the extremists as intellectually serious and rational beings, rather than unthinking vessels driven to terrorism by circumstances beyond their control, gives the best hopes of averting tragedy like at Fishmonger's Hall.

As we have seen, when the chips are down, jihadists have historically pleaded innocence or ignorance. But the reports above suggest this is not how Britain's imprisoned extremists are behaving. Far from it. This indicates that they do not perceive themselves to be in a state of weakness but in one of strength. After living their lives as close as possible to the ideal Islamic state from inside the prison walls, it seems likely that upon release, many will continue to try to do so while they wait for the caliphate or divine reward they are assured will eventually arrive.

I have [written before](#) about the possibility of the jihadist movement in Europe evolving into a belligerent and destructive social force, rather than one merely focused on mass-casualty attacks, which were only ever a means to an end. The subcultures developing in prisons translating to the outside world would see these extremists creating micro-communities which reject and withdraw from the surrounding unbelief of society, in order to instil their own norms and values in line with the principle of "loyalty and disavowal" (*al-wala' wa'l-bara'*).

Of course, the problem should not be overstated: the numbers being discussed here may be unprecedented, but they are nonetheless small. There are graver threats and societal issues facing Britain and her allies. But at the same time, being prepared to combat the threat, not just through security or intelligence, but intellectually, is critical. In certain locations, a mere handful of extremists have already been able to multiply their followings into several hundred over the course of a decade. The networks — perhaps better thought of as micro-communities— they fostered would go on to fill the ranks of Isis.

Far from radicalised online and overnight, many of those who migrated to Isis's Caliphate project were extremist activists who were already, as Bernard Rougier [put it](#), "living in an imagined caliphate" from inside the unbelief of the West. Through the barrel of an AK-47, Isis transformed their fantasy into an irresistible operational reality, so they merely diverted their energy from practice and proselytising in the likes of [Brussels](#), [Trappes](#), [Portsmouth](#) or [Gothenburg](#) towards migration to Islamic State.

The risk is that the genie is again out of the bottle. 9/11 resulted in al-Qaeda's decimation but nonetheless succeeded in advertising jihadism to the entire world on live television. ISIS, by contrast, declared itself a caliphate and invited confrontation with the West which reduced it to rubble, but nevertheless succeeded in advertising not just attacks, but the Salafi-jihadist endgame to the world. We do not yet know who and how many were paying attention.

With the time they are afforded in British, European and Kurdish prisons, the movement is currently assessing the mistakes and shortcomings of that episode so as not to repeat them. Some will conclude the attacks of Bataclan or Manchester Arena were counterproductive, so will channel their energies into other means but remain believers.

Others will no doubt remain committed to more of the same. Despite its apparent medieval rigidity, jihadism is a constantly mutating phenomenon which adapts to its own time and place. How the movement evolves and re-emerges from its current ailing condition depends on the discussion and debate happening right now inside cells and on prison landings. It's time to start paying attention.

HEADLINE	<b>08/31 Uganda IS-linked militants attack in Congo</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://northafricapost.com/60359-ugandas-is-linked-militants-kill-scores-of-villagers-in-east-congo-attacks.html">https://northafricapost.com/60359-ugandas-is-linked-militants-kill-scores-of-villagers-in-east-congo-attacks.html</a>
GIST	<p>Suspected Islamist militants killed at least 40 civilians in a string of attacks on several villages in east Democratic Republic of Congo over the past few days, according a local human rights group and a hospital worker.</p> <p>Assailants, believed to be members of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), first targeted a group of villagers from North-Kivu province that had crossed into neighboring Ituri province to look for arable land near the Ituri River last Thursday (25 August). Since then, ADF fighters had killed more than 40 men, women and children in five villages, says Christophe Munyanderu, coordinator of the local group Convention for the Respect of Human Rights (CRDH). “All this under the eyes of the authorities,” he added. “We are dying here but nothing is being done.”</p> <p>A nurse at a hospital in one of the villages said he saw the bodies of 26 villagers who were killed and 76 kidnapped in one of the attacks. Also, the head of the surrounding Babila-Bakaiko locality, Charles Kisubi Endukadi, confirmed that suspected Islamist militants attacked several villages and that most bodies were not yet recovered. The Congolese army did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The ADF, a Uganda militia with ties to Islamic State, is one of several armed groups wrangling over resources and attacking civilians in Congo’s east, which is rich in minerals such as tin, tantalum, tungsten, and gold.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>09/01 PM to ‘follow-up’ Canadian spy claim</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/sep/01/shamima-begum-justin-trudeau-to-follow-up-canadian-spy-claim">https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/sep/01/shamima-begum-justin-trudeau-to-follow-up-canadian-spy-claim</a>
GIST	<p>Justin Trudeau has pledged to “follow up” on allegations that a spy working for Canadian intelligence trafficked British schoolgirls into Syria where at least one married an <a href="#">Islamic State</a> fighter.</p> <p>Shamima Begum was smuggled into the hands of Islamic State at the age of 15, and the work of the people smuggler for the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) was covered up by the police and Britain’s security services, it has been claimed in a book out this week.</p> <p>British police launched an international search for the trio at the time. Begum, along with her schoolfriends Kadiza Sultana, then 16, and Amira Abase, then 15, were met at Istanbul bus station for their onward journey to Syria by a man called Mohammed al-Rashed.</p> <p>Rashed was <a href="#">also an informant for Canadian intelligence</a>, who told the Met police of their connection with him in March 2015, a few days after Begum had crossed the border to join the terrorism group. But neither the British nor Canadian authorities have previously acknowledged the link.</p> <p>Asked about the case at a news conference, Trudeau defended the need for intelligence services to be “flexible and creative in their approaches ... in their work to keep <a href="#">Canada</a> and Canadians safe in a very dangerous world”.</p> <p>At the same time, he added, CSIS must abide by Canadian laws and “strict rules” of conduct. “We expect those rules to be followed,” Trudeau said. “I know there are questions about certain incidents or operations of the past and we will ensure to follow up on those.</p> <p>“We will continue to ensure that proper oversight is done and as necessary, look at further steps.”</p> <p>The claim is made in The Secret History of the Five Eyes by Richard Kerbaj, which is published on Thursday. Five Eyes is the network of intelligence-sharing between Britain, the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.</p>

It reports that two officials from CSIS met then Met head of counter-terrorism, Richard Walton, in March 2015, shortly after Begum's disappearance, a meeting that the senior police officer felt was self-serving.

They said they hoped that CSIS would not become a focus for investigation, prompting some concern in the mind of Walton. "If you are running agents you are acquiescing in what they are doing," Walton said in an interview for the book, although he also acknowledged there may have been some intelligence benefit to the relationship.

At the time, the Met was engaged in a frantic search for the girls. Two are now dead. Begum had her British citizenship revoked in 2019 after the then home secretary, Sajid Javid, decided she had aligned with IS because she had remained on the group's territory and constituted a danger to the British public.

Her family's lawyer, Tasnime Akunjee, argues that Begum was trafficked out of the country. The suggestion that a western intelligence asset may have been involved, including organising bus tickets for her, will reignite the debate over the removal of her British citizenship.

The supreme court upheld that decision and Begum, now 23, lives in a detention camp in northern Syria, having given birth to three children, all of whom died young.

There was no suggestion in the supreme court judgment that the British authorities knew the circumstances of her smuggling into Syria. Begum is due to make a fresh case at the special immigration appeals commission in November.

The UK government has declined to comment on the CSIS revelations, citing its policy on "operational intelligence or security matters".

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HEADLINE	<b>08/31 Taliban celebrate anniversary US pullout</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.dw.com/en/afghanistan-taliban-celebrate-anniversary-of-us-withdrawal/a-62981649">https://www.dw.com/en/afghanistan-taliban-celebrate-anniversary-of-us-withdrawal/a-62981649</a>
GIST	<p>The Taliban celebrated on Wednesday the <a href="#">first anniversary of the withdrawal of US-led troops from Afghanistan</a>.</p> <p>Afghanistan's de facto rulers commemorated the withdrawal and their capture of Kabul with victory chants and a parade that showcased equipment left behind by international forces.</p> <p>Foreign media outlets were not given access to the event.</p> <p>'Freedom Day'</p> <p>A Taliban government spokesperson wished Afghans a happy "Freedom Day" on Twitter.</p> <p>In a separate statement, the government said the day marked "the country's freedom from American occupation."</p> <p>"So many mujahideen have been wounded (over the years), so many children became orphans and so many women have become widows."</p> <p>Groups of Taliban fighters marched as helicopters flew by, state television footage showed.</p> <p><a href="#">Military vehicles seized in the war or left behind during the 2021 withdrawal</a> were paraded as part of the celebrations. On Tuesday night, Kabul's skies were lit up by fireworks.</p> <p>Banners celebrating victories against the US, Soviet Union and Britain were also flown in the Afghan capital. Soviet troops left Afghanistan in 1989 following a nine-year conflict, while the British Empire fought three wars in Afghanistan in the 19th and 20th centuries.</p> <p>Taliban seek international recognition</p>

	<p>On the day of the anniversary of the withdrawal of US-led forces, the Taliban government reiterated its demands to be recognized as Afghanistan's legitimate government.</p> <p>"The experience of the past 20 years can be a good guide ... Any kind of pressure and threats on Afghanistan's people in the last 20 years has failed and just increased the crisis," the Taliban said in a statement.</p> <p>The movement asserted in the statement that the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, the official name of the Taliban-run state, is the "legitimate government of the country and the representative of the brave Afghan nation."</p> <p>The Taliban called on the international community to allow for an independent Islamic government in Afghanistan which would have "positive interaction with the world."</p> <p>The international community has <a href="#">pressed the Taliban on human rights, including on the right of girls to education</a>. In the year since they seized power, the Taliban have shut girls' secondary schools in many parts of the country and blocked women from many government jobs.</p> <p>The departure of US forces on August 31, 2021 marked <a href="#">the end of Washington's longest war</a>. Some 66,000 Afghan troops and 48,000 civilians were killed during the two decades-long conflict, as well as over 2,400 US soldiers.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/31 Reports on US Afghanistan withdrawal?</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.cbsnews.com/news/afghanistan-withdrawal-biden-yet-to-release-after-action-reports/">https://www.cbsnews.com/news/afghanistan-withdrawal-biden-yet-to-release-after-action-reports/</a>
GIST	<p>One year after President Biden <a href="#">announced the end</a> of America's war in Afghanistan, the administration has yet to release its after-action reports on the end of the U.S. military presence in the country and its chaotic non-combatant evacuation after President Ashraf Ghani's government collapsed and the country fell to the Taliban.</p> <p>The reports coming from both the Defense and State departments, which will examine the period between February 2020 and the U.S. withdrawal in August 2021, have been done for weeks but are still going through review and declassification.</p> <p>Though the contents and conclusion of the reports are unknown, and it remains unclear if they will be released—all or in part—publicly, officials within the administration admit that there is very legitimate criticism of the planning for the U.S. withdrawal having come too late, particularly by the State Department.</p> <p>The State Department's report, which was led by retired career ambassador Dan Smith, is "classified so that it could draw from every appropriate original source material," Spokesperson Ned Price said in an <a href="#">August 15 press briefing</a>. Price also said "It is our hope and expectation that we will be able to release publicly elements of that report."</p> <p>Without saying whether the reports—or parts of them—may ever be made public, U.S. Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Dr Colin Kahl told reporters on August 8, "I do think it's an obligation for all of us to take a hard look not just in the final days of Afghanistan but 20 years of the conflict. That's important to the Secretary of Defense, important to the White House, it's important to members of Congress, and I hope, to the degree that it's possible, we try to take that assessment out of politics and the desire to score points and really just to reflect on the lessons from America's longest war."</p> <p>State Department Deputy Principal Spokesperson Vedant Patel told reporters Monday that the department still did not have a timeline for releasing the report.</p> <p>"We will be as transparent as possible with the report, consistent with classification and other considerations, and we hope to have an update to you all as soon as possible," he said.</p>



A U.S. defense official told CBS News on Wednesday that the Defense Department's "classified review," which is a separate document from the State Department's review, is complete and has been turned into the Secretary of Defense, who is reviewing it.

National Security Council spokesman John Kirby also told reporters Wednesday, "We said that we're going to do a comprehensive look once all the agencies have done their reviews. And so, it's a process ongoing."

The top Republican on the House Foreign Affairs Committee released an interim report on the Biden Administration's withdrawal from Afghanistan in time for the one-year anniversary of the fall of Kabul to the Taliban on August 15. Rep. Michael McCaul's report pins blame mostly on the State Department for failing to plan ahead of the impending Taliban takeover and the chaotic non-combatant evacuation operation at Kabul's international airport, where crowds stormed its barricades, individuals clung to the wings of departing planes, and a suicide bomber killed 170 Afghans and 13 U.S. service members.

NSC spokesperson Adrienne Watson said the GOP report was "riddled with inaccuracies", "advocates for endless war and for sending even more American troops to Afghanistan", and "ignores the impacts of the flawed deal that former President Trump struck with the Taliban."

Despite characterizing the Trump-era peace deal as "flawed," the Biden administration ultimately decided to keep the withdrawal plan. The deal promised a timeline for the US troops' withdrawal in exchange for Taliban guarantees to prevent the use of Afghan soil by any international terrorist groups or individuals and the beginning of peace negotiations between the Taliban and Ghani's then-ruling elected government. The diplomatic agreement was conditions-based, and envisioned the creation of a new government that the Taliban would be part of.

But those intra-Afghan discussions were bogged down and the Ghani government was excluded from the U.S.-Taliban talks, there were clashes between the U.S. and Afghan governments over a promise to release Taliban prisoners, and Taliban fighters were continuing to attack and kill members of Afghan government forces. As diplomacy stalled, Taliban fighters advanced on the battlefield. Unwilling to extend the presence of U.S. forces in Afghanistan until conditions improved, President Biden decided to keep the Trump-era agreement and withdraw all troops.

President Biden last August blamed Afghan forces and their leadership for their own nation's demise.

"What's happened? Afghanistan political leaders gave up and fled the country. The Afghan military collapsed, sometimes without trying to fight," Biden said on Aug. 16, 2021, the day after Kabul fell. "American troops cannot and should not be fighting in a war and dying in a war that Afghan forces are not willing to fight for themselves."

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## Suspicious, Unusual

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HEADLINE	08/31 Oddly quiet Atlantic despite forecasts
SOURCE	<a href="https://apnews.com/article/storms-science-oceans-weather-patterns-climate-and-environment-13fe98ef66d68230926095333686b90b">https://apnews.com/article/storms-science-oceans-weather-patterns-climate-and-environment-13fe98ef66d68230926095333686b90b</a>
GIST	<p>NEW ORLEANS (AP) — It's been quiet — too quiet — this Atlantic hurricane season, meteorologists and residents of storm-prone areas whisper almost as if not to tempt fate.</p> <p>A record-tying inactive August is drawing to a close and no storms have formed, even though it is peak hurricane season and all experts' <a href="#">pre-season forecasts warned of an above normal season</a>. Nearly all the factors that meteorologists look for in a busy season are there.</p>



Warm ocean water for fuel? Check.

Not a lot of wind shear that decapitates storms? Check.

[La Nina](#), the natural cooling of the central Pacific that changes weather patterns worldwide and increases Atlantic storm activity? Check.

Yet zero storms formed. Surprised experts point to unusual persistent dry air and a few other factors. But each time they and computer simulations think something is brewing, nothing comes of it.

“It has been surprisingly and freakishly quiet in the Atlantic,” University of Miami hurricane researcher Brian McNoldy said, pointing out that weak Tropical Storm Colin fizzled out on July 2 and there’s been nothing since.

It’ll be the first time since 1941 that the Atlantic has gone from July 3 to the end of August with no named storm, Colorado State University hurricane researcher Phil Klotzbach said. Since 1950, only 1997 and 1961 had no named storms in August and 1961 then went hyperactive in September, including [deadly Carla](#), he said.

In Lake Charles, Louisiana, one of the more weather-battered cities in the past decade, residents have noticed how quiet the hurricane season is so far and it’s almost “testing fate” to bring it up, Mayor Nic Hunter said. From August 2020 to August 2021, the city was hammered by two hurricanes — [Laura](#) and [Delta](#) — only six weeks apart, a deep freeze and spring flooding. Residents still have blue tarps on their roofs.

“I think there’s a lot of knocking on wood. There’s a lot of prayers,” Hunter said. “Until the season is over, I don’t think anybody’s going to have any sighs of relief.”

Certainly not 74-year-old Shirley Verdin, who lives about 200 miles (320 kilometers) away in Bayou Point-Au-Chien, where [Hurricane Ida](#) ripped through on Aug. 29 last year. She now lives in a Federal Emergency Management Agency trailer next to her gutted home that will be demolished down to the pilings this weekend so it can be rebuilt.

There are wisps of potential storm systems swirling in the Atlantic that meteorologists are following and so is Verdin. Closely.

“I know there’s something out there right now,” she said.

The National Hurricane Center is watching three thunderstorm systems in the Atlantic and gives them all at least a 50% chance of becoming a named tropical storm, with one of them a likely sounding 80%. But Colorado State’s Klotzbach has seen this before this year and isn’t counting on them.

Just late last week, the computer forecast models predicted three maybe four storms forming, including one becoming a major hurricane with winds of more than 110 mph (177 km/h), Klotzbach said.

Then nothing.

For the past month and a half, thunderstorms that could be seeds of hurricanes power off Africa looking strong enough “but then they encounter a lot of dry air that’s just sitting over the Atlantic,” University of Albany atmospheric scientist Kristen Corbosiero said. “The dry air has really been the main thing that’s been stopping storms from really getting going.”

Relative humidity is about 15% below normal and there’s been Saharan dust in there making it drier, McNoldy and Klotzbach said.

The dry air does a couple things, Corbosiero said. Those thunderstorms become more potent and get their energy as warm moist air rises off the ocean. The ocean is warm enough, but the dry air causes that water to evaporate, cool and go down, not up, she said.

That dry air also helps create cross winds about 2 miles up (3 to 4 kilometers) “that can really do damage to a storm trying to form,” Corbosiero said.

Matthew Rosencrans, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s lead hurricane outlook forecaster, said he sees signs that the dry air is ending and normal moisture will be returning, which could mean more storms. Rosencrans also says crosswinds at other heights, especially in the Caribbean and Gulf of Mexico also were a factor in dampening storm activity until now.

Other factors include a patch of sinking air over the Atlantic, a poorly located high pressure system also connected to the European heat wave and dust, the scientists said.

It’s been weird in the tropics, too, but in a different way, Klotzbach said. Before this year, the north Indian Ocean has had only one named storm in August; this year there are two, he said. And in the Pacific, Supertyphoon Hinnamnor is not only the most powerful storm on Earth this year, but it’s moving southwest when these type storms usually move west to east, Klotzbach said.

“There’s some odd stuff going on,” Klotzbach said.

But in the Atlantic nothing’s really going on and victims of past years’ storms don’t want to jinx it.

“Wouldn’t it be wonderful?” Louisiana resident Thomas Halko asked about whether the so-far quiet hurricane season will continue. Halko lives in southeastern Louisiana’s Jefferson Parish, in an area hammered by Hurricane Ida last year. A house on his property shifted clear off its foundation and had to be demolished.

“We made it through the week and it looks like we’re in relatively good shape for the next five days or so,” he said of the upcoming weather report.

But it’s hard to appreciate the quiet when he feels a “nervous anticipation of doom” thinking about the ongoing hurricane season.

“There is this foreboding that really won’t go away,” he said.

Hurricane season peaks around Sept. 10 and stretches through Nov. 30.

“It is important to remember the lessons of [Hurricane Andrew](#), which devastated South Florida and Louisiana in an otherwise quiet year,” National Hurricane Center acting Director Jamie Rhome said in an email. “It only takes one landfalling hurricane to make it a bad season for you, and we still have many months to go in the hurricane season.”

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HEADLINE	09/01 Airlines air turbulence to worsen?
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.cnn.com/travel/article/clear-air-turbulence-climate-change/index.html">https://www.cnn.com/travel/article/clear-air-turbulence-climate-change/index.html</a>
GIST	<p>(CNN) — Most of us have experienced turbulence while traveling: when your plane flies through clashing bodies of air moving at widely different speeds.</p> <p>Severe turbulence can put even the most seasoned flier on edge and make five minutes seem like an eternity. Usually it results in nothing more than a bumpy ride, but in the worst cases it can cause damages and injuries.</p>

In nonfatal accidents, turbulence is the leading cause of injuries to flight attendants and passengers, according to the [Federal Aviation Administration](#), and it's one of the most common airline accident types today, according to the US [National Transportation Safety Board](#). It costs US airlines -- due to injuries, delays and damages -- up to \$500 million per year, according to the [National Center for Atmospheric Research](#).

"There is a scale for measuring how strong turbulence is," says Paul Williams, a professor of atmospheric science at the University of Reading in the UK. "There's light turbulence, which is a bit of strain against your seat belt, but food service can continue and you can probably walk around the cabin, maybe with some difficulty.

"Then there's moderate turbulence, a definite strain against seat belts, anything that's not secured will be dislodged, and walking is difficult; flight attendants are usually instructed to take their seats.

"The worst kind is severe turbulence: this is stronger than gravity, so it can pin you to your seat and if you're not wearing your seat belt you'll be tossed around inside the cabin. This is the kind of turbulence that causes serious injuries -- it's been known to break bones, for example."

### **Strikes fast and no visual clues**

About 65,000 aircraft suffer moderate turbulence every year in the US, and about 5,500 run into severe turbulence. These numbers, however, might be destined to grow. Williams believes that climate change is modifying turbulence, and started studying the subject in 2013. "We ran some computer simulations and found that severe turbulence could double or triple in the coming decades," he says.

The findings, which were later confirmed by observations, highlight a type of turbulence called "clear air turbulence," which isn't connected to any visual clues such as storms or clouds. Unlike regular turbulence, it hits suddenly and is hard to avoid.

According to the NTSB, between 2009 and 2018, the flight crew had no warning in about 28% of turbulence-related accidents. Williams' analysis predicts that clear-air turbulence will increase significantly around the globe by the period 2050-2080, in particular along the busiest flight routes, and the strongest type of turbulence will increase the most.

That doesn't mean, however, that flying will be less safe. "Planes are not going to start falling out of the sky, because aircraft are built to very high specification and they can withstand the worst turbulence they can ever expect to encounter, even in the future," says Williams.

However, the average duration of turbulence will increase. "Typically, on a transatlantic flight, you might expect 10 minutes of turbulence. I think that in a few decades this may increase to 20 minutes or to half an hour. The seat belt sign will be switched on a lot more, unfortunately for passengers."

### **The seat belt sign is now switched on**

Keeping your seat belt fastened at all times while seated is the best way to minimize the risk of injury due to turbulence.

Flight attendants, however, are more exposed to that risk than passengers and sustain approximately 80% of all turbulence-related injuries. "We're the most likely to get hurt because we're up working, pushing 300-pound carts, even when there's some sort of warning," says Sara Nelson, a United flight attendant with 26 years of experience and the president of the Association of Flight Attendants, a union representing 50,000 flight attendants across 20 airlines.

"We have flight attendants who have been thrown into the ceiling and then back down several times, resulting in broken limbs. In the aisle, with unannounced turbulence, we had people who lost toes, or lost the ability to work, or sustained injuries that kept them off the job for years," she adds.

The aviation industry is taking the problem very seriously, Nelson says, but the transition to sustainable fuel must accelerate to tackle the climate crisis, and some regulations need to change. For example, the ability for children under the age of two to fly on their parents' lap.

"That is totally unsafe and our union has been calling for a seat for every person on board," Nelson says. "Not only can a child be thrown around the cabin, but when they come down they can actually hurt someone else, too. When a child is born, you can't leave the hospital unless you have a properly installed car seat. The same standards must be applied to flying."

### **Calls for stringent new rules**

The NTSB held a public meeting about turbulence last year, during which it offered the same recommendation, along with more stringent rules about fastening seat belts for both passengers and flight attendants when the aircraft is flying in the vicinity of thunderstorms and under 20,000 feet, as most injuries occur under these conditions. It also recommended to streamline the systems for collecting and sharing turbulence reports, because that information isn't traveling widely or promptly enough at the moment.

While the effects of climate change on turbulence will take many years to become obvious, Nelson believes some worsening has already occurred.

"This is of course anecdotal, but from Hurricane Katrina forward there seems to have been a pickup in the activity of turbulence, especially turbulence that comes with no warning," she says.

Her worst ever turbulence experience occurred during a flight to Dallas, which was eventually diverted.

"When anything happens on the plane, the passengers look to us, to see if we look concerned," she adds. "I was flying with a very good friend of mine and we were strapped in on the jump seats, facing the back of the aircraft -- so there was a lavatory in front of us, instead of passengers.

"Thank goodness, because we were clutching each other and we were getting thrown around in our seats so violently that it felt like our brains were getting scrambled. It went on for a very long time, but luckily we got safely on the ground," she says.

"Typically I'm not scared of turbulence, because it's something that we're taught about in training and we know what to do to protect ourselves. But it is possible to have turbulence so bad and go on for so long that even knowing all of that, my friend and I were praying -- and I have to say I was scared for my life."

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HEADLINE	<b>08/31 Report: record-high level greenhouse gases</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/International/2021-record-high-greenhouse-gases-sea-levels-ocean/story?id=89108285">https://abcnews.go.com/International/2021-record-high-greenhouse-gases-sea-levels-ocean/story?id=89108285</a>
GIST	<p>Last year saw record levels of major greenhouse gases, including carbon dioxide and methane, released into the Earth's atmosphere, according to an international climate report.</p> <p>The annual <a href="#">State of the Climate report</a>, published Wednesday in the Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society and led by scientists from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Centers for Environmental Information, also found that global sea level and ocean heat reached record highs in 2021.</p> <p>"The data presented in this report are clear -- we continue to see more compelling scientific evidence that climate change has global impacts and shows no sign of slowing," NOAA administrator Rick Spinrad said in a statement. "With many communities hit with 1,000-year floods, exceptional drought and historic heat this year, it shows that the climate crisis is not a future threat but something we must address today as we work to build a Climate-Ready Nation -- and world -- that is resilient to climate-driven extremes."</p>

Greenhouse gas emissions from human activities are the "most significant driver of observed climate change since the mid-20th century," according to the [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#), warming the climate as they build up in the atmosphere.

In 2021, the global annual average atmospheric carbon dioxide concentration was 414.7 parts per million (ppm) -- 2.3 ppm greater than the amounts measured in 2020, according to the latest State of the Climate report. That marks the highest amount measured since 1958 -- the start of the instrumental record -- and in at least the last million years, based on paleoclimatic records, the report found. It was also the fifth-highest growth rate in the modern record.

Two other major greenhouse gases -- methane and nitrous oxide -- also saw record concentrations last year, according to the report. The annual increase in methane was the highest in the modern record, and the growth rate of nitrous oxide the third-highest, it found.

Last year was the fifth- or sixth-warmest on record, depending on the dataset referenced, with the last seven years (2015-2021) the seven warmest years on record, according to the report.

Global ocean heat content, measured from the ocean's surface to a depth of more than 6,000 feet, saw record levels in 2021, "indicative of steadily increasing heat in Earth's system," according to the report. Meanwhile, the global sea surface temperature cooled compared to 2019 and 2020, due to the ongoing La Niña conditions in the tropical Pacific, though it was higher than the 1991-2020 average, the report found.

For the 10th year in a row, the global average sea level rose about 4.9 mm to a new record high, according to the report. The level was about 97 mm higher than the average recorded in 1993, when satellite measurements began, the report stated.

Both global ocean heat content and global average sea level saw "year-on-year increases substantially exceeding their trend rates of recent decades," the report stated.

Among other highlights, the report found that tropical cyclone activity was "well above average" in 2021, with 97 named tropical storms during the Northern and Southern Hemisphere storm seasons compared to the 1991-2020 average of 87. Last year's storm season saw Hurricane Ida, a category 4 cyclone that was the costliest U.S. disaster last year and the fifth most expensive hurricane on record since 1980, with \$75 billion in damage, the report noted.

The climate report, now in its 32nd issuance, is based on contributions from more than 530 scientists in over 60 countries.

"The 2021 AMS State of the Climate provides the latest synthesis of scientific understanding of the climate system and the impact people are having on it," American Meteorological Society associate executive director Paul Higgins said in a statement. "If we take it seriously and use it wisely, it can help us thrive on a planet that is increasingly small in comparison to the impact of our activities."

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## Crime, Criminals

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HEADLINE	08/31 Reported sex assaults in military rose 13%
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/31/us/politics/sexual-assault-military.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/31/us/politics/sexual-assault-military.html</a>
GIST	WASHINGTON — Reports of sexual assaults in the military rose sharply in 2021, once again defying efforts by the Pentagon to address a problem that has long bedeviled the men and women who serve in the country's armed forces, two U.S. officials said Wednesday.

	<p>The increase, about 13 percent over the previous year, may be driven in part by the easing of coronavirus pandemic restrictions that were put in place in 2020, the officials said. The Pentagon has made the report available to Congress and will release it formally on Thursday, they said.</p> <p>According to the latest findings, <a href="#">reported earlier by The Associated Press</a>, nearly 36,000 service members said in a survey that they had experienced unwanted sexual contact, almost double the number in 2018, the officials said, speaking on the condition of anonymity to describe the report before its public release.</p> <p>The Defense Department has struggled with sexual assaults and a reporting structure that required reports to be filed through the military's chain of command. Last year, senior Pentagon leaders, after fighting efforts to change the reporting structure, indicated that they would be willing to try a new approach.</p> <p>In December, Congress voted to strip military commanders of most of their authority to prosecute sexual assaults and myriad other criminal cases. Under the new law, independent military prosecutors replace commanders in determining whether those accused of sexual assault, rape, murder, domestic violence and an array of other offenses will be prosecuted.</p> <p>The numbers in the latest report do not reflect the change in reporting structure.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>08/31 Seattle continues backslide on crime</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/seattles-awful-august-shows-the-city-continues-to-backslide-on-crime/">https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/seattles-awful-august-shows-the-city-continues-to-backslide-on-crime/</a>
GIST	<p>A good August is when nothing happens. But this one has been more like the devil's month, <a href="#">as some call it in South America</a>.</p> <p>During a time that, one hoped, was going to mark some summer recovery from the social dislocations of the pandemic, Seattle is instead continuing to slide backward — dangerously so in the areas of street crime and drugs.</p> <p>Seattle has seen 11 homicides this month — making this the deadliest single month in the city as far back as the <a href="#">police's crime dashboard</a> has records (to 2008). The previous high for any month was nine homicides, and for any August before this one, six.</p> <p>How that 11th killing came about sums up Seattle's August. Police were up on Aurora Avenue late Monday night for a domestic violence call, when the alleged perpetrator began shooting at them. Right when that stopped, officers heard shots coming from a new direction.</p> <p>"While taking him into custody, they heard multiple gun shots coming from the north," police Chief Adrian Diaz said Tuesday.</p> <p>A few blocks away, also on Aurora, near North 145th, two men had been gunned down in the street in a completely unrelated shooting. One died there.</p> <p>Crime like this can ebb and flow. But currently the city is on its deadliest pace in nearly three decades. Seattle this month has also passed 500 shootings for the year — a year that is only two-thirds done.</p> <p>I know I sound like old man shouting at clouds, but here goes anyway: When is Seattle going to rouse itself from its comfortable numbness and acknowledge it's got a serious crime problem?</p> <p>I recall communitywide outrage and mobilization about a decade ago when Seattle first started seeing an average of one shooting per day. Now there are two shootings daily — up 100% from before the pandemic. But there's no similar rallying to action. The shootings — even the killings — are becoming background noise.</p>



I fear the same is happening with drug overdoses and deaths. August has been the cruelest month on that front, too. The city's 911 system has recorded 53 drug casualty calls just this month, more than double the average from the spring.

King County [tracks all overdose calls](#). In August, so far, paramedics have attended to 141 opioid overdoses *just in downtown Seattle*. That's five overdoses per day in that one neighborhood.

A year ago it was less than half that. Most of these are nonfatal, but the [number of deaths due to fentanyl overdoses](#) is about to exceed last year's grim record — and again, it's only August.

This all can't start to feel like normal.

As many readers point out, these twin crises of rising crime and drugs are [not unique to Seattle or Washington state](#). Cities, towns, and rural areas across America are struggling as well. There's no simple known cause — other than the big obvious one, the pandemic. It isn't clear though exactly how the pandemic triggered, or accelerated, such a cascading series of social ills.

I think I've [harped enough](#), for now, on how our city botched its relations with police, and then also failed to stand up much in the way of alternatives. The politics of that time didn't cause these crime or opioid waves. But the dysfunction sure isn't helping the city fight them now. Hopefully city leaders can find a way past all that.

To move in a more positive direction, maybe one effort Seattle could try now is a citywide push to “reverse the pandemic.”

What happened during the pandemic? We separated. Schools and other institutions closed; programs went dark; mentoring stopped. It seems to me that this rending of social networks was quietly very damaging, but hasn't gotten much of a repair effort.

Mayor Bruce Harrell had an inspiring idea when he got 4,000 volunteers to show up for a Seattle “Day of Service.” That was one day. How about a citywide drive to “reverse the pandemic” with tutoring, volunteering, block watching, mentoring?

I mean it's got to be more productive than [buying giant planters and filling them with gravel](#) to block the RVs from camping in front of your house — as some desperate residents have now done out in Ballard.

It's clear from the August data cited above, and stories like that one out of Ballard, that something has frayed. It often seems like some city leaders won't acknowledge this, let alone marshal help. So sometimes people feel compelled to take matters into their own hands.

The pandemic was a powerful disruptive force; it stands to reason it could take an equally mighty effort to stitch things back together.

Recently a national council on crime put out a report titled [“Pandemic, Social Unrest and Crime in U.S. Cities.”](#) It found 10 things cities can do, right now, to improve the situation — from taking responsibility, to setting clear crime-reduction goals, to engaging and empowering the community to help. Seattle has done maybe three of the 10.

“These actions can begin immediately, without the need for massive budgets or new legislation,” the report said. “The main ingredients are courage and commitment.”

For Seattle, I'd go down one notch more basic. First we need to admit we have a problem. August can't end soon enough, so there's always September to get started.

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SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/31/world/asia/un-china-xinjiang-uyghurs.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/31/world/asia/un-china-xinjiang-uyghurs.html</a>
GIST	<p>GENEVA — In a long-awaited report released on Wednesday, the United Nations’ human rights office accused China of serious human rights violations that “may constitute international crimes, in particular crimes against humanity,” in its mass detention of Uyghurs and other predominantly Muslim groups in its far western region of Xinjiang.</p> <p>The <a href="#">assessment</a> was released shortly before midnight in Geneva and minutes before Michelle Bachelet, the U.N. high commissioner for human rights, was set to leave office.</p> <p>The release ended a nearly yearlong delay that had exposed Ms. Bachelet and her office to fierce pushback by rights groups, activists and others who had accused her of caving to Beijing, which had sought to block the report.</p> <p>The 48-page report did not use the word “genocide,” a designation <a href="#">applied by the United States</a> and by <a href="#">an unofficial tribunal in Britain</a> last year. But it validated rights groups’ and activists’ claims that China has detained Uyghurs, Kazakhs and others, often for having overseas ties or for expressing religious faith.</p> <p>The report is “an unprecedented challenge to Beijing’s lies and horrific treatment of Uyghurs,” said Sophie Richardson, the China director for Human Rights Watch. “The high commissioner’s damning findings explain why the Chinese government fought tooth and nail to prevent the publication of her Xinjiang report, which lays bare China’s sweeping rights abuses.”</p> <p>To Uyghur activists, the report’s findings were a powerful vindication of their yearslong effort to draw attention to the suppression of ethnic minorities in Xinjiang. Beijing has routinely rejected any assertions of arbitrary detentions and abuses in Xinjiang and has accused Uyghur activists of lying. The activists say their families in Xinjiang have been imprisoned, detained and threatened by the authorities to try to silence them.</p> <p>“It paves the way for meaningful and tangible action by member states, U.N. bodies and the business community,” said Dolkun Isa, president of the World Uyghur Congress. “Accountability starts now,” he added.</p> <p>Tahir Imin, a Uyghur activist in Washington, said that because of the months of delays and pressure from Beijing, he was surprised that Ms. Bachelet had come through with releasing the report before she left office, and that its findings were forceful.</p> <p>“I wasn’t expecting it to come up with such a strong conclusion,” he said by phone. “I was a little emotional when I saw it mentioned crimes against humanity.”</p> <p>In comments emailed early Thursday local time by the office of the U.N. high commissioner for human rights in Geneva, Ms. Bachelet said of the report, “I said that I would publish it before my mandate ended and I have.”</p> <p>She explained that the delay in publishing had been because she “wanted to take the greatest care to deal with the responses and inputs received from the (Chinese) government last week.”</p> <p>China, which received a copy of the report days before its release, had pressured Ms. Bachelet not to publish it. The report was a “farce orchestrated by the United States and a small number of Western powers,” Zhao Lijian, a spokesman for China’s foreign ministry, said at a regular news briefing on Wednesday. China submitted a 131-page response that said the human rights office’s “so-called ‘assessment’” was “based on disinformation and lies” and ignored its success in stopping extremism in Xinjiang.</p> <p>When news of the detentions began trickling out, the Chinese authorities at first denied the detention campaign, but later said they were teaching basic job and language skills to bolster employment and prevent radicalism.</p>

Former detainees, however, have described physical abuse, mistreatment and hours of indoctrination in Communist Party ideology. Some of those held have included successful artists, scholars, businesspeople and other community leaders who had no need for job training.

United Nations researchers interviewed 26 former detainees, two thirds of whom described treatment “that would amount to torture and/or other forms of ill-treatment.” The report also said allegations of sexual and gender-based violence, including of rape of people in custody, appeared credible.

It also said that the “arbitrary and discriminatory detention” of Uyghurs and other predominantly Muslim groups “may constitute international crimes, in particular crimes against humanity.” The report said, however, that the U.N. agency was not able to confirm estimates of the total number of people held or affected by the system China calls vocational education and training.

Among its recommendations, the U.N. agency called on China to promptly release all people who have been arbitrarily confined, clarify the whereabouts of people who have gone missing and whose family members have sought information on and investigate allegations of abuses in the facilities.

As the U.N. high commissioner for human rights, Ms. Bachelet had spoken out frequently and often frankly on abuses and concerns across all continents, including on China’s crackdown on democracy in Hong Kong. But when it came to China’s treatment of dissidents and the allegations of crimes in Xinjiang, she had spoken with extreme caution.

Criticism against Ms. Bachelet intensified after she visited China in May and made a short trip to Xinjiang but offered little disapproval then of the crackdown in the region, instead saying the chief outcome of her trip was to foster high-level discussion with the Chinese authorities.

Ms. Bachelet’s comments were denounced by overseas Uyghurs and rights groups that accused her of ignoring widespread repression. The report by her office was welcomed as a long-overdue recognition of the abuses that China has been accused of committing as part of state policy in the region.

Though the report’s publication on Wednesday may spare Ms. Bachelet from charges by activists that she was derelict in her duty, it will not end the controversy over her dealings with Beijing.

U.N. investigators had a report on Xinjiang on Ms. Bachelet’s desk nearly a year ago, but [she was accused of repeatedly deferring publication](#). At a recent news conference, she acknowledged that she had given priority to reaching agreement with Beijing on the terms of her visit to China.

Ms. Bachelet’s parting address to the Human Rights Council on Tuesday shed some light on her reasoning. She emphasized her belief in the importance of constructive dialogue with states and the need to do “everything possible to avoid a great fracture” in multilateral institutions.

Critics say her approach largely played into Beijing’s hands.

“By releasing this crucial report with just minutes left on her mandate, she has only done the bare minimum,” said Sarah M. Brooks, program director of the International Service for Human Rights. “We must now push for her office, her successor and states to ensure survivors get answers and perpetrators face accountability.”

Ms. Richardson, of Human Rights Watch, urged the United Nations Human Rights Council to begin an investigation into the Chinese government’s “crimes against humanity targeting the Uyghurs and others — and hold those responsible to account.”

The long delay in publishing the report may make that harder.

	Diplomats in Beijing said its late release left little time for governments or rights groups to build a robust response in the Human Rights Council, which starts its last session of the year in 12 days.
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HEADLINE	<b>08/31 New York's lethal rise of 'subway surfing'</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/aug/31/subway-surfing-new-york-deaths-injuries">https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/aug/31/subway-surfing-new-york-deaths-injuries</a>
GIST	<p>The video quickly went viral in June: a group of people dashing across the roof of a moving New York City J train. Captured from far off, the train can be seen about to cross the Williamsburg Bridge, with its 135-foot drop to the East River – yet the daredevils, dressed in black, leap from car to car.</p> <p>A similar stunt resulted in a far more horrifying clip days less than two weeks later, when a 15-year-old boy suffered a severe head injury while riding on top of a 7 train in Queens. Footage reviewed by the Guardian showed first responders hoisting the profusely bleeding teen off the roof and laying him on the floor with part of his skull separated.</p> <p>On Monday, another 15-year-old boy in Queens tried to climb on to the roof of an R train with three friends, only to have his arm severed when he fell on to the tracks and the train ran him over, according to reports.</p> <p>New Yorkers call it “subway surfing”: a stunt riders have attempted and died from since the transit system’s earliest days, but which has returned as a disturbing trend over the last year among young men and teenage boys who often post the clips online.</p> <p>According to statistics provided by the Metropolitan Transit Authority, there have already been 627 incidents of people riding outside of trains between January and July this year – up from 96 incidents during the same period last year.</p> <p>Ken, a Brooklyn resident, told the Guardian he was on an M train last week departing Manhattan’s Delancey-Essex station when a group of about eight boys wearing backpacks, some of whom looked as young as 12, boarded and began “hyping each other up”. Then they used the railings between the subway cars to climb on to the roof as the train chugged over the Williamsburg Bridge.</p> <p>“Full speed going over the Williamsburg Bridge, we could hear footsteps on top. At times they were running,” he said. “I was quite concerned, obviously: if someone slips and falls, it’s game over.”</p> <p>Ken said it was “sad seeing their careless attitude toward life, succumbing to peer pressure and doing these incredibly dumb actions.”</p> <p>A New Yorker in his late 30s called D-Side told the Guardian he had started subway surfing with his friends as a teenager, after he missed his uptown 6 train one day and decided to grab on to the back. The experience was “a rush like anything else” and even addicting. “It’s a good feeling, even though it’s completely meaningless. Why does someone skydive? Why does someone use drugs? They like what it makes them feel. And then they keep chasing that over and over again.”</p> <p>Then tragedy struck D-Side’s best friend, Alex Nasad, a graffiti artist who went by Drone. He was killed in 2002 while he was train surfing an uptown 1 train and apparently hit a support beam. “I think he was just shit-faced drunk. It was like: ‘Oh shit, look, I could go get a rush.’”</p> <p>D-Side swore off train surfing after Nasad’s death. “A lot of people I know who I told this to are dead right now. So I don’t have clear-cut answers to how we stop people from doing this.”</p> <p>The act of train surfing dates back more than a century in New York City. Local newspaper archives mention people getting maimed or killed riding on top of trains as early as 1904 – the year the subway opened – when two boys, 13 and 14, were struck by a low bridge while riding on top of a Grand Central-bound railcar, killing one of them and injuring the other. One thing seems constant throughout</p>

the decades: the victims are young, male, and impulsive. As a 1991 story in the New York Times about subway surfing put it, the “risk is the lure”.

In 2016, a 25-year-old Instagram star was killed while trying to subway surf in Brooklyn, while apparently intoxicated. A Bronx subway surfer in his 30s was killed in 2017 after falling off and getting run over. In 2018, a 24-year-old man was electrocuted after standing on top of a commuter train following a Yankees game. In 2019, a 14-year-old boy named Eric Rivera was killed while surfing a 7 train. “I can’t believe that you would risk your life to do that,” his mother told local outlet the City at the time. “What’s the joy of it, what’s the fun of it? I don’t see it.” Last October, a 32-year-old man was killed while subway surfing when he fell on to the tracks and was run over by the J train.

There may be few more familiar with the stunt’s consequences than the doctors who treat its victims. A physician at a major trauma hospital in New York who asked to remain anonymous recalled treating a train surfer who had gruesome head injuries. Other physicians at the hospital were “pretty judgy” about the victim, the physician said. “The usual response is, ‘Wow, what a stupid thing to do.’”

“That’s what emergency care is for, I guess,” the physician added. “People live their crazy lives and we’ll always be here to witness it.”

The MTA’s chief safety and security officer, Patrick Warren, said in an emailed statement: “Riding outside of subway cars is reckless and extremely dangerous. This behavior can result in awful consequences, as it likely has for the young man who was severely injured on Monday.” The MTA’s fine for riding outside of the train is \$75.

New York’s train surfing casualties mirror a growing global trend of injuries and deaths from social media-related stunts, as app algorithms reward users for producing extreme content, sometimes as part of viral “challenges”. D-Side believes the return of train surfing is “100%” correlated to social media usage, which has intensified people’s craving for attention. “It’s a hive mind. People chase clout. They care about other people’s opinions. They care about being somebody making a name for themselves. It breeds people wanting things right now.”

Today he’s a father who no longer chases adrenaline. “The thrill I seek now is just watching my kids grow,” he said. “Honestly, I feel lucky to be here.”

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HEADLINE	<b>08/31 Seattle’s seemingly endless graffiti problem</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://komonews.com/news/local/city-still-working-on-seemingly-endless-graffiti-problem-throughout-seattle">https://komonews.com/news/local/city-still-working-on-seemingly-endless-graffiti-problem-throughout-seattle</a>
GIST	<p>SEATTLE — It is a seemingly endless problem in Seattle, crews clean up graffiti and it is back within days.</p> <p>The most recent example is a pedestrian tunnel at ‘Sam Smith Park,’ which WSDOT crews cleaned up last week, but by Wednesday, the graffiti was starting to come back.</p> <p>That’s not the only place dealing with issues. In Little Saigon, a brick wall that Mayor Bruce Harrell personally <a href="#">painted months ago</a> has been tagged, and repainted, again and again.</p> <p>"We don't get tagged that often because we're taking care of it every day," Caitlin Boyer, Belltown Inn’s general manager, said, adding it is hard work to keep the graffiti off of their building. Boyer said they have to continuously paint the walls.</p> <p>Boyer also said their hotel staff has to cover up graffiti across the street at ‘Regrade Park,’ a city park, which is not on their property.</p> <p>"It's not no, but we're a hotel. We have customers who are here to see a beautiful city and our city isn't beautiful with graffiti everywhere," adding that she has not seen city crews come by to clean up that park.</p>

Not too far away, Tom Graff with the neighborhood organization 'Belltown United,' showed us another building that they constantly have to repaint.

Graff, frustrated with the city's engagement on the issue, said they have to do better.

"The solution to me is, number one: we enforce the graffiti ordinance and you fine these owners who don't paint out the graffiti," Graff said, "you encourage people to paint out the graffiti in 24-48 hours including SDOT and WSDOT property and number three: you charge these people doing this property crime with a crime and there is punishment to it," he added.

City Ordinance information states:

***"The City of Seattle Graffiti Nuisance Ordinance requires property owners to remove graffiti found on their property within 10 calendar days. If graffiti is gang or hate related it must be removed within 48 hours (Seattle Municipal Code 10.07.010 et seq.). Failure to remove graffiti within the above time period can lead to fines and legal action against the property owner. We recognize that finding and removing graffiti on your private property is frustrating. However, outcomes can be worse if graffiti is not removed. The sooner the graffiti is removed, the less likely your property will be vandalized again."***

It costs a lot of money for the city to clean up graffiti.

"Seattle currently has \$3.68M in general funds budgeted," officials with Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) told KOMO.

Through data they provided, so far in 2022, citizen graffiti reporting to their office is at its lowest since 2019.

Their spokesperson responded to our questions saying:

***"Graffiti reports for both public and private property come in via Find It, Fix It, a graffiti hotline, a web form, and regular Graffiti Rangers patrols. The Graffiti Rangers proactively patrol Seattle in rotating quadrants to help ensure underserved communities that utilize reporting tools less frequently still receive equitable services. SPU also notifies other departments, state and federal agencies, and public schools when they discover their assets have been tagged."***

Ninety percent of graffiti on SDOT and SPU structures is cleaned up within 6 business days of a report, and often within 2 business days. It is City policy to prioritize hate graffiti for abatement, and 100% of this is cleaned up by SPU, SDOT, and the Parks Department within 24 hours of being reported.

SPU has resumed graffiti enforcement on private property but understands that property owners are victims of a crime. All enforcement efforts are also combined with offers of free paint, supplies, staff assistance and education on how to make the property more graffiti-resistant. As a last resort fines are only imposed if a property owner refuses to abate the graffiti.

Besides assisting property owners, SPU also supports graffiti abatement volunteer programs and grants for BIAs. Volunteers with programs like Adopt a Street, Red Wagon Paint Out, and Spring Clean are provided with materials and training to remove graffiti from private property in their neighborhoods.

The SPU Rangers perform proactive clean-ups once a week in each sector of the city. Over 90% of graffiti reported via the Find It, Fix It app on SDOT and SPU structures is cleaned up within six business days, and often within two business days. Abatement is prioritized first by hate graffiti and then by the proactive cleanups in each sector and as they come into the Find It Fix it app from around the city. SPU Rangers work M-F, and occasional Saturdays have been added to keep up with requests. Belltown, the Central Business District, Pike Place Market, and Pioneer Square generally have the most reports of graffiti."

On Wednesday, Seattle Police officials told KOMO, "SPD continues to pursue graffiti cases and make arrests."

	<p>A spokesperson for the Office of Mayor Bruce Harrell told KOMO they are putting together a plan to deal with the graffiti, “we are working on a citywide approach and strategy to graffiti -- as the issue touches every neighborhood and many City departments as well.”</p> <p>When it comes to cleaning up graffiti on state property, WSDOT officials Wednesday told KOMO it costs taxpayers about \$350 thousand a year in the WSDOT Northwest Region (Island, King, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish and Whatcom counties).</p> <p>It is a dollar amount they say has increased recently, as more emphasis is being placed on graffiti removal. When it comes to the tunnel at Sam Smith Park, WSDOT officials said they will keep doing maintenance as needed to remove the reoccurring graffiti.</p>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>08/31 Violent attacks at Seattle firefighters rise</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://www.king5.com/article/news/crime/seattle-firefighters-violent-attacks/281-099a846f-5ea3-4090-8cbd-a70be35139bb">https://www.king5.com/article/news/crime/seattle-firefighters-violent-attacks/281-099a846f-5ea3-4090-8cbd-a70be35139bb</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>SEATTLE — The <a href="#">Seattle Firefighters Union</a> wrote a letter to the City Council following about 40 alleged attacks in four months while they were on the job.</p> <p>KING 5 News obtained the letter that was sent on July 26 of this year. The letter detailed two specific attacks and explained that firefighters are trained to put out fires, not protect themselves from violent attacks.</p> <p>One firefighter was attacked while fighting a fire at an encampment at 10th Avenue South and South Dearborn Street. Someone threw a large rock at the firefighter while they were doing their job, according to the letter.</p> <p>Another attack happened while firefighters were providing aid to someone and they pulled out a knife, began chasing the crew and threatened to kill them. When the firefighters retreated to their firetruck, the suspect climbed on top of the engine and was later detained.</p> <p>In the letter, Seattle Fire Fighters Union President Kenny Stuart asked the council for changes in policies and actions to help mitigate the issue.</p> <p>"We battle structure fires, vehicle fires, explosions, electrical hazards, chemical hazards, structural collapse, and infectious diseases, but we have been slow to recognize that intentional physical violence against firefighters is unacceptable. It is not the same as a burning building or a car wreck," Stuart wrote.</p> <p>On Wednesday, Seattle Mayor Bruce Harrell addressed their concerns.</p> <p>"They are facing some very critical situations where their own safety is constantly put at risk," Harrell said. "We are also trying to figure out when someone is in a crisis, what kind of skill set should be in front of this person as well, so our budget will reflect this acknowledgment that many of our officers and our firefighters are putting themselves in harm's way."</p> <p>In response to the letter, Councilmember Lisa Herbold said she asked the Seattle Fire Fighters Union for details of the incidents to get a fuller picture of the attacks.</p> <p>"I unequivocally condemn acts of violence and I support the safety of all in public service, especially first responders who put themselves in harm's way, both at SPD and SFD," Herbold wrote in <a href="#">her newsletter</a>.</p> <p>Stuart also wrote in the letter that he believed that the number of attacks could be higher because some of the attacks are not being reported.</p>
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